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Glory
of the
Immortal life.



GLORY

OF THE

IMMORTAL LIFE,

EMBRACING

THE PROPHECIES AND PROOFS OF THE GREAT DOCTRINE OF
IMMORTALITY—IN THE ANALOGIES OF NATURE—THE
LONGINGS AND DEMANDS OF THE SOUL—THE
CLEAR AND SUFFICIENT ASSURANCES
OF DIVINE REVELATION:

WITH MEDITATIONS UPON

DEATH, RESURRECTION, HEAVEN, ITS BEATITUDE AND GLORY. ITS
SERVICE AND SOCIETY—CONFIRMED AND ILLUSTRATED BY
THE TESTIMONIES OF MANY OF THE MOST GIFTED
AND SANCTIFIED MINDS OF PAST AGES.

By J. E. STEBBINS,

AUTHOR OF "MOSES AND THE PROPHETS, CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES,
FATHERS AND MARTYRS."

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BREVITY OF THIS LIFE.

MAN that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down.

JOB xiv. 1, 2.

WHEN a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.

JOB xvi. 22.

FOR I know that thou wilt bring me to death and to the house appointed for all living.

JOB xxx. 23.

ONE generation passeth away, and another generation cometh.

ECCLESIASTES i. 4.

ALL go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

ECCLESIASTES iii. 20.

FOR all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief.

ECCLESIASTES ii. 23.

FOR the living know that they shall die.

ECCLESIASTES ix. 5.

OUR days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

I. CHRON. xxix. 15.

THOU changest his countenance, and sendest him away.

JOB xiv. 20.

THEN shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

ECCLESIASTES xii. 7.

GLORY OF THE IMMORTAL LIFE

THEN shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

MATT. xlii. 43.

THEN shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

MATT. xxv. 34.

AND they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

DAN. xii. 3.

AND God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow.

REV. xxi. 4.

THE gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ROMANS vi. 23.

FOR I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

ROMANS viii. 18.

IN my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you.

JOHN xiv. 2.

FOR we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

II. COR. v. 1.

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NAMES OF PERSONS WHOSE VIEWS ON THESE TOPICS ARE QUOTED.

Homer,	Tertullian,	Janeway,
Socrates,	Jerome,	Halyburton,
Plato,	Cyprian,	Watts,
Aristotle,	Chrysostom,	Flavel,
Demosthenes,	Basil,	Doddridge,
Cicero,	Augustine,	Robert Hall,
Strabo,	Eliot,	Dick,
Cato,	Newton,	Humboldt,
Josephus,	Bishop Butler,	Henry Martyn,
Irenæus,	Des Cartes,	Griffin,
Clement,	Baxter,	Payson,
	Whately,	Hitchcock,
	Harbaugh,	Thompson.

P R E F A C E .

CHANGES in human society affect its demands, its character, and history. They are the inevitable consequences of the condition of things in the world, and human life in all cases must be subject to them. Everything beneath the sun will fade and pass away. The hopes and promises which make the morning of life so bright are seldom realized at its noon, and the sun at evening, as far as temporal things are concerned, often goes down amid cloud and disappointment.

It would seem that the knowledge of this certain failure of things on the earth would incite the mind of man to institute the inquiries oftener, "What is abiding? Is there anything to which the human soul can attach itself that will stand the shocks of time?" The present volume, it is believed, will aid the candid seeker after truth, although it claims to be little else than the echo of other voices that have sounded, at different periods, down through the ages of time. This can scarcely be otherwise, for here we consider those things which change does not affect. The realities which meet us here are the same to-day that they were a thousand years ago. Our concern with them is also always the same, and their power over mind and heart to secure the requisite end of being is in no wise different. This work, then, comes to all hearts and homes alike, appealing as well to the unlettered student as to those of greater insight. It in no way professes to be a learned discussion, in which divines and

critics can revel with satisfaction to their profounder and sharper intellects. But we think that it can never fail to interest the thoughtful spirit to study the workings of the human mind, and observe how from the beginning it sought to throw off the shackles of ignorance, pierce through the mists of darkness and superstition, and look with clear vision over and through upon the other side. The ancients walked in dim shadow, but they were continually struggling for the light. Why, then, should mortals living under the full glory of the sun of inspiration, with the unerring certainties of revelation before them, so often shut out that light which others so earnestly coveted? The gates of the Celestial City have been opened to us, and our departing Christian friends catch a glimpse of the brightness of the heavenly world, —

“Ere the farewell is hushed in this.”

Standing as we do between the *mortal* and the *immortal*, constantly liable to be removed from *this* into *that*, it is well to be assured of what awaits us — to be conversant with that which we must meet.

The considerations herein expressed are for every household in the land. That they may guide some mind in its search after what is true, — that they may confirm some who are doubting, quicken some who are hesitating, stir the thoughtless, and help those who have low views to grasp the divine ideal, — is the humble wish of the writer. That the work may carry consolation to many death-smitten circles is the fervent prayer, with the hope that it will also give glad conceptions to all who look upon this picture of the *glories of the immortal life*, inasmuch as its brightest and only worthy tints have been borrowed from the sketches of divinest models — the *sacred artists*.

J. E. S.

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“WHAT shall our lot be, when we lay aside
These cumbering vestments of mortality?”

is a question that has exercised the human mind, and agitated the human heart, from the earliest ages; accompanied, indeed, with cheerless doubts whether the living, acting principle, the possession of which self-consciousness assures, be that which shall run parallel with interminable ages, or find its full end in the narrow round of a few fleeting years on earth. From the depths of anxious souls, down through all time, there has been the ceaseless echo of the same question, *Are we immortal, or are we not?* For long periods man's history and destiny were like an ocean of unfathomable mysteries; the waves of dark uncertainty ever sweeping onward, beating against the shores of ill-concealed oblivion. But *mind*, in its restlessness for something more, was never content to dwell upon the frontier of so shadowy a land, and therefore continually sought to know if the realm before was real and actual, or unreal — an indefinable *nothing* — an *evermore*, or

nevermore. No other matter of equal interest could absorb the attention of thinking men, none as relating to himself. As the Great First Cause is higher and nobler than all created intelligences, and his interests higher than all human interests, we might suppose that minds which he had created in his own image, and associated with organisms of such wonderful skill, would first of all be engaged in the contemplation of the character of *their* Creator, and the study of his will. But mortals would fain know *themselves*; would lift the veil of mystery; clear away the mists of doubt that surround their own future, and understand whither they are bound, what shall attend them on their way, and what awaits them at the close; for *an end* is a natural idea of man. In connection with this idea there must of necessity be solicitude; and what shall meet it? Observation cannot, *experience* cannot. Who, then, shall solve the enigma? From whence cometh light to illumine the dark recesses of mind? It is not strange that the spirit's cravings are for this knowledge, and that, prior to the gospel's cheering revelations, a thousand ways of man's devising had been opened, each promising to conduct the multitude through their labyrinthian journey, to a, perhaps, possible state in some very doubtful region, either within or without God's universe. The closing day and setting sun inspire no terror, and bring no dread, for the morrow's sun is an object of assured hope, and this assurance precludes doubt and disquiet. So man, as he approaches the evening of his days, the twilight of his existence, would fain be persuaded that a new era of gladness will open before him, and his soul exult in the continuation of that most desirable of all things, *life*. He cannot rest while all things depend upon uncertain *ifs*. Ever and anon he will be engaged in the profound soliloquy, "If I am destined to an eternal existence, if the powers of my mind are being disciplined for another state, how incalculably momentous is *time*! What infinite importance attaches to the actions, pursuits, and affections of the present! How desirable

that the energies of my being be so directed as to find that channel through which flow those streams of felicity which constitute the bliss of endless life !

" But if it be not thus, if it be the whole of life '*to live*,' if it be that the whole of existence is circumscribed within the narrow circle of the few, fleeting years that pass between the first wail of infancy and the last agony of worn-out, expiring nature, then of what avail are the plans and purposes I am continually forming? Why cherish affection? It will soon die out. Why practise virtue, since there is no inducement? I am to myself an enigma, an inexplicable mystery, that I fail to find out. O, tell me, ye winged winds, and mighty waves of ocean tide, if in all your broad circuits ye have found the '*land of Evermore*.' "

Such are the queries which self will ever propose to self, in its unsettled, unenlightened state ; and the response that comes up from the deep caverns of untaught Nature is not sufficient for the spirit's repose. There is something more needful ; yet Nature hath its teaching and its wise counsel, to which all may well give heed.

Everything that hath a tendency to establish the doctrine of man's immortality will be invested with a thousand charms for the thoughtful and reflective mind, which regards with becoming interest its future destination. Its frequent consideration, its constant repetition, can never divest the idea of its power, for each for himself must personally prove its reality, to his own ineffable joy or sorrow. From whatever source the knowledge be derived, it will be taken into close embrace as of vital account, while the whole man grows stronger and better, under the firm conviction of an immortal destiny.

In considering the doctrine of the soul's immortality, upon which hinges the "New Jerusalem, or the life to come," we shall first consider proofs from the light of *Nature*. Accordingly the present chapter is given to the contemplation of

the truth that *there has been in all time, among all nations and people, the universal belief of a future, endless life.*

The idea of some "*immeasurable, boundless time*" has, at least, been an *undertone* in the human spirit from the beginning. Far back in the most ancient traditions of the pagan world, ere civilization and learning had shed their benign rays upon the moral darkness of man, the doctrine of immortality held sway over his mind. A celebrated philosopher of early time, in speaking of the happiness of those who departed this mortal life, represents the birth of such an opinion as dating at such an uncertain period in the past, that none knew when it began to be, or who was its author, therefore rendering it easy to believe it was handed down from earliest ages. "Before we have any light into antiquity," says Lord Bolingbroke, whose want of interest made it no willing confession, "these things began to be taught; and when we begin to have any, we find it established, that it was strongly inculcated from time immemorial, and as early as the most ancient and learned nations appear to us." The mysteries of another life were among the first things toward which Reason turned its piercing eye; and though it had not yet gained the advantage of telescopic vision, it discovered, through the dim ether, glimpses of that which awakened the deepest interest and most anxious inquiry. How could it be otherwise? for "the soul of the very first pagan was immortal, and consequently of infinite capacity in this respect, and it would therefore, by impulse of its own nature, breathe after the infinite." Dim and confused, indeed, were all notions of future life and endless existence, for it was the "gray twilight of the world's morning," when not the faintest sign was visible to herald the approach of the sun of celestial Truth which should arise, with "healing in its wings," dispensing light and gladness upon the yearning, darkened souls of men. They struggled for victory; they knew not what. With an instinctive belief in the unknown, the unseen,

they yet panted for certainty. The fervor of their belief was visible in a thousand absurd manifestations, and the numberless superstitions woven into their web of thought show the imperfect character of their hopes ; but it illustrates the point at issue, that the desire for immortality is an innate principle in the human mind, thus affording strong presumptive proof of the truth of the doctrine.

It stood like a *pillar of light*, around which were ever-widening circles, in which *error* and *distortion* appeared like giant sentinels, casting a broad shadow to obscure the light struggling from the centre ; but faint beams did struggle through, and had their legitimate effect upon the world around. It made the cloud upon the horizon seem still more dark, and the mists below still more heavy ; but it was an earnest of that true light which was to break forth to enlighten the world. As in the *natural*, so in the *spiritual* world, darkness precedes light, and evening is followed by morning. We, who rejoice in the full splendor of gospel light, must find it both profitable and interesting to discover in these remote ages of the past, in the dim light of antiquity, the appearance of that truth which succeeding centuries have unfolded, and divine revelation confirmed to us, beyond the possibility of a doubt. It is a mournful state of things, and widely to be deprecated, that so large a portion of the human race at the present day are sitting in the shadows of ignorance and barbarism ; but it is also interesting to notice how these same people believe in the life, the *eternal* life of the soul. Imagination, it is true, has been tasked to its utmost limit to produce satisfactory theories ; and unrestrained by the only proper guide, depraved passions and sensual natures have been the inspiration and starting-point, from whence have sprung forms of monstrous growth. They strangely intermingle the mortal and the immortal, peopling immensity with animals, men, and gods, according to their own confused and low notions of what constitutes the bliss of immortality. "Among the numerous and diversified

tribes that are scattered over the different regions of the earth," says Dick, "that agree in scarcely any other sentiment or article of religious belief, we here find the most perfect harmony in their recognition of a Supreme Intelligence, and in their belief that the soul survives the dissolution of its mortal frame. And, as Cicero long since observed, 'In every thing the consent of all nations is to be accounted the law of nature, and to resist it is to resist the voice of God.' For we can scarcely conceive, in consistency with the divine perfections, that an error, on a subject of so vast importance to mankind, should obtain the universal belief of all nations and ages, and that God himself would suffer a world of rational beings, throughout every generation, to be carried away by a delusion, and to be tantalized by a hope which has no foundation in nature, and which is contrary to the plan of his moral government. It is true, indeed, that many opinions which prevail among the uncivilized tribes of mankind, in regard to the *condition* of disembodied spirits, and the *nature* of future happiness, are very erroneous and imperfect; but they all recognize this grand and important truth, that death is not the destruction of the rational soul, and that man is destined to an immortal existence. Their erroneous conceptions in respect to the rewards and punishments of the future world may be easily accounted for, from a consideration of the imperfect conceptions they have formed of the divine Being, and of the principles of his moral government; from their ignorance of those leading principles and moral laws by which the Almighty regulates the intelligent universe; from the false ideas they have been led to entertain respecting the nature of substantial happiness; from the cruel and absurd practices connected with the system of pagan superstition; from the intellectual darkness which has brooded over the human race ever since the fall of man; and from the universal prevalence of those depraved dispositions and affections which characterize the untutored tribes on whom the light of revelation has never shone."

To whatever cause this universal belief of a future existence is to be traced, — whether to a universal tradition derived from the first parents of the human race; to an innate sentiment originally impressed on the soul of man; to a divine revelation, disseminated and handed down from one generation to another, or to the deductions of human reason, — it forms a strong presumption — a powerful argument — in favor of immortality.

If it is to be traced back to the original progenitors of mankind, it must be regarded as one of those truths which were recognized by man in a state of innocence, when his affections were pure, and his understanding fortified against delusion and error. If it be a sentiment which was originally impressed on the human soul by the hand of its Creator, we do violence to the law of our nature when we disregard its intimations, or attempt to resist the force of its evidence. If it ought to be considered as originally derived from revelation, then it is corroborative of the truth of the sacred records, in which "life and immortality" are clearly exhibited; and if it be regarded as likewise one of the deductions of natural reason, we are left without excuse if we attempt to obscure its evidence, or to overlook the important consequences which it involves.

As the consent of all nations has been generally considered as a powerful argument for the existence of a Deity, so the universal belief of mankind in the doctrine of a future state ought to be viewed as a strong presumption that it is founded upon truth. The human mind is so constituted, that, when left to its native, unbiassed energies, it necessarily infers the existence of a Supreme Intelligence, from the existence of matter, and the economy of the material world; and from the nature of the human faculties, and the moral attributes of God, it is almost as infallibly led to conclude that a future existence is necessary, in order to gratify the boundless desires of the human soul, and to vindicate the wisdom and rectitude of the moral Governor of the world. These two grand truths,

which constitute the foundation of all religion, and of everything that is interesting to man as an intelligent agent, are interwoven with the theological creed of all nations; and in almost every instance where the one is called in question, the other is undermined or denied; so that the doctrine of the immortality of man may be considered as resting on the same foundation as the existence of the *Great Supreme*.

Homer, the distinguished father of poetry, history, and philosophy, embodied the sentiments of the Greeks in his writings, giving descriptions and allusions which furnish convincing proof that the idea of the soul's immortality was a prevalent opinion in the time in which he wrote. Hints and passages are constantly occurring in which he supposes the separate existence of human souls; and that which he makes Achilles to say, after the death of his beloved friend, Patroclus, indicates the state of his own mind with reference to the subject.

“’Tis true, ’tis certain; man, though dead, retains
Part of himself: th’ immortal mind remains;
The form subsists without the body’s aid,
Aerial semblance, and an empty shade.”

His account of the descent of Ulysses into hell, and his description of Minos in the shades below, distributing justice to the dead assembled in troops around his tribunal, and pronouncing irrevocable judgments which decide their everlasting fate, demonstrate the entertainment of the belief that virtues are rewarded, and crimes punished, in another state of existence.

Others of the ancient poets have also intimations to the same effect, showing that the nations to whom their writings were addressed were interested in the same thought. The same opinions are involved in the poems of Ovid and Virgil. “Their notions of future punishment are set forth in the descriptions they give of Ixion, who was fastened to a wheel and whirled about continually with a swift and rapid motion; of Tantalus,

who, for the loathsome banquet he made for the gods, was set in water up to the chin, with apples hanging to his very lips, yet had no power either to stoop to the one to quench his raging thirst, or to reach to the other to satisfy his craving appetite." Various and similar allusions shadow forth the same great truth. Wise philosophers of the past, whose names have come down through the long lapse of ages, with whom is associated much that is profound, have added strength to the testimony.

They have sayings which are as gems from the mine of truth; that are as true to-day as when, with earnest, far-reaching thought, they brought them up from the realms of doubt and darkness, to be a light to inquiring minds forever after. They were scintillations of light whose brightness will never be obscured.

Looking within, to the mysteries of the inner world of life, they could but reason themselves into a higher, diviner state of existence. Thus in Phocylides are sentences like the following: "Immortal souls, free from old age, live forever." "All the dead are equal, but God governs souls." "We hope to see the remains of the dead come out of the earth into light, after which they will be gods; for incorruptible souls remain in the dead. The spirit is the image of God, given to mortals." This is indeed strangely-sounding phraseology to disciples of a more perfect day and more perfect philosophy; but it is one thing to see the human mind struggling to free itself from chains, and another to see those chains effectually removed by the Great Deliverer. It is one thing to stand on the high point of present advantage, and witness the mighty conquests which truth has made under the auspicious reign of the Most High, and quite another thing to take our position with those men, who stand, as it were, unconsciously burnishing weapons for an uncertain warfare.

Suppose one of the loftiest mountains of our globe, towering high above the clouds, had never been visited. Standing

in its solitary grandeur, it is an object of interest to all; but its gigantic height and difficulty of access render the idea of scaling its summit a matter of improbability.

And suppose a throng of eager adventurers, from various motives of interest and pleasure, to be animated with a desire to accomplish the task, and take within the range of their own vision the broad sweep that circleth round this silent monitor of Nature. The pathway is unknown. They have no certain knowledge to guide them. They have never trod these fastnesses, to tell what characterizes them; and of course their views, and consequently their paths, would diverge from the beginning. While one might see that which would invite him in a certain direction, another would consider the opposite path far more alluring. Others still would observe new indications, and there gain their own adherents, and thus would separate groups pursue their own way, yet all bent upon the same object — all seeking the same point. A few, perhaps, sink exhausted by the way, but the majority reach the summit; some, it is true, by a more circuitous path than was needful; but, having no established precedent, their own convictions became the guiding-star of action, and some allowance is always necessary for the uncertain rays of mere human conviction.

Something like this was the doctrine of immortality in the early ages. It stood in its own solemn grandeur and sublimity, far above all other truths relating to the history of man, and mankind would fain sound its depths and scale its heights. It pierced the skies, and they longed to know what was visible from such a point; if, indeed, "*sweet fields*" were discovered to lie beyond, exceeding all that was ever presented to the range of ordinary vision. They yearned to possess the true knowledge. They sought it — earnestly pursued it; by different ways, it is true, and with different degrees of success. The way was not clearly opened, for the "Star in the East" had not yet appeared; the boundary line between the *seen* and the

unseen had not been recrossed to tell what was upon the other side. It was a devious way, and they faltered in it; but it is interesting to follow them and catch their words as they proceeded, for it leadeth on and up to the true goal.

Socrates, an Athenian philosopher, the most celebrated of all antiquity, whose name has become almost as familiar as that of a household friend, was deeply interested in this subject. Four hundred years before Christ he gathered about him a band of devoted disciples, and imparted unto them his own superior wisdom—*superior* for the time in which he lived. His extraordinary mind and genius excited the envy and malice of some, while it elicited the warmest admiration of many. In the groves of Academus, the Lyceum, and on the banks of the Ilissus, he was followed by those who listened with delight as he discoursed of immortal things, and rehearsed the probability of ages “which none but God doth number,” and of truth which flowed like a river “fast by the oracle of God.” Mingling exhortation with his teaching, he besought them to the consideration of that which, if true, was of infinite moment—of the deepest personal interest—worthy of the most profound study and the most faithful investigation. Could it be established, it might be theirs to be acquainted with mysteries of bliss, “high on the hills of immortality,” in the future which awaited them. “Whether this be really so,” said he, “the Divinity alone knows; but I cannot find it in me to disbelieve so probable and desirable a truth.” It was a favorite theory of this philosopher that things are produced by *contraries*; and in conversation with Cebes, a pupil of his, the latter is made to ask this question:—

“Do you now tell me likewise in regard to life and death. Do you not say that death is the contrary of life?”

“I say so.”

“And that they are produced from each other?”

“Yes.”

“What, then, is that which is produced from life?”

"Death," said Cebes.

"And that which is produced from death?"

"I must allow," said Cebes, "to be life."

"Then, Cebes, from the dead are living things and living men produced?"

"It seems so," he replied.

"Therefore," said he, "our souls exist in Orcus, after death."

"I think so."

"Of their stages of generation, then, is not one, at least, obviously distinct? For dying is surely an intelligible idea - is it not?"

"Certainly it is," said he.

"How, then," he continued, "shall we do? Shall we not oppose in turn to this the contrary process of generation, but shall Nature fail in this? Or must we allow some process of generation contrary to dying?"

"By all means."

"What is it, then?"

"Reviving."

"Therefore," said he, "if reviving is granted, this should be the process of generation from the dead to the living, viz., reviving?"

"Certainly."

"We allow then in this way that the living are produced from the dead, no less than the dead from the living; but, such being the case, it appeared to me to furnish adequate proof that the souls of the deceased exist somewhere, from whence they return again into life."

"Such, Socrates, appears to me to be the necessary result from what has been admitted."

"Observe, now, Cebes, that we have not, in my judgment, made these admissions without reason; for if those things which are produced were not continually to alternate with each other as if revolving in a circle, but the generation were direct from the one (contrary) merely to its opposite, nor should take a

circuit and come round again to the first, are you aware that all things at last should assume the same figure, submit to the same affection, and cease to be produced at all?"

"How say you this?"

"There is no difficulty in comprehending what I say; but if, for instance, falling asleep be granted, and that awaking, which is produced from sleeping, were not to alternate with it, be assured that all things coming to an end would render the fable of Endymion a mere jest, and he no longer would be considered of importance, because all things else would be influenced by an affection such as he was, by sleep; further, if all things were confounded together, and never divided asunder, the theory of Anaxagoras would soon be realized---*all would be chaos.*

"Thus, my dear Cebes, if all things which had partaken of life should die, and when dead should remain in the same state of death, and not revive again, would there not be an unavoidable necessity that everything should perish at last, and nothing revive?"

"For if living things were produced from anything else than what had died, and those living things should die, what remedy would there be against all things being finally destroyed by death?"

"None whatever, Socrates, in my mind," answered Cebes; "but to me you seem to speak the clearest truth."

"Such," said he, "Cebes, the case unquestionably seems to me, and that we do not acknowledge these things under the influence of delusion; but there is in reality a reviving and producing of the living from the dead, a surviving of the souls of the deceased, and happiness for the good, but misery for the evil amongst them."

Upon another occasion, when Simmias, another disciple, was engaged with Cebes in the contemplation of the same subject, the question was proposed, whether two "species of existences might not be supposed," the one visible and the other invis-

ble ; the latter always the same, but the former never at any time so.

"Come, now," said the philosopher, "is anything else the case than that one part of us consists of body, and the other of soul?"

"Nothing else," was the reply.

"To which of the two, then, shall we say that the body bears the greater resemblance, and is the more closely allied?"

"To the visible," said Cebes, "as must be plain to every one."

"But what of the soul? Is it visible or invisible?"

"It is not visible to mankind, at least, Socrates," was the answer.

"But we were speaking surely of what is visible, and what is not so, according to the nature of man. Or do you think it was with a view to any other?"

"It was according to the nature of man."

"What, then, do we assert of the soul? That it is visible, or invisible?"

"Invisible."

"Is it then immaterial?"

"Yes."

"Does the soul, therefore, bear a greater resemblance to the immaterial than the body, but the latter resemble more the visible?"

"It is imperatively so, Socrates," was the pupil's response.

"Did we not likewise lay this down a short time since, that when the soul makes use of the body to investigate anything, either by the sight, hearing, or any other sense, — for to consider any object through means of the senses is the same as through means of the body, — it is then indeed forced by the body in the direction of those things which are forever subject to change, upon which it becomes distracted and confused, and reels as if inebriated, because it is involved in matters of this kind?"

"It is certainly so."

"But when," he continued, "it considers any subject by itself, does it proceed in the direction of what is pure, everlasting, immortal, and immutable? and, as if closely allied to this, does it abide with it ever, when it is left to itself, and is empowered to do so? and is it relieved of its distraction? and, as being placed in connection with things like itself, is it always identical and unchangeable with regard to them? And is this condition of the soul called wisdom?"

"You speak, Socrates," said he, "with the utmost fairness and truth."

"To which species of the two, then, both from what was said before and that just now, does the soul appear to be more like and the more closely allied?"

"Every one, Socrates," replied Cebes, "even the dullest, would, in my mind, allow, from this mode of investigation, that the soul, in every respect, bears a greater resemblance to that which is always the same than to that which is not."

"But what of the body?"

"It more resembles the latter."

"But view it, also, in this light, that, when the soul and body are together, nature enjoins submission and obedience on the one, and on the other authority and command. In this light, again, which of the two seems to you to resemble the divine, and which the human? Does it not appear to you that the divine is naturally adapted to govern and guide, but the human to be governed and to serve?"

"So it seems."

"Which, then, does the soul resemble?"

"It is evident, Socrates, that the soul resembles the divine, but the body the human."

"Observe, then, Cebes, if such be our conclusion from all that has been said, that the soul bears the stronger resemblance to that which is divine, immortal, intelligent, uniform, indissoluble, always the same, and identical with itself; but that the body resembles more that which is human, mortal, unintelligent,

multiform, soluble, and at no time identical with itself. Can we object to this conclusion, my dear Cebes, that it is not fairly drawn?"

"We cannot, Socrates."

"What then? When these things are so, is it not natural for the body to be speedily dispersed, and for the soul to be altogether indissoluble, or very near it? Is this soul of ours, — being such in itself and in its nature, — on its separation from the body, likely to be dissipated and destroyed? Far from it, my dear Simmias and Cebes. It is far more likely to stand thus: that it will go hence to that which resembles itself, the invisible, divine, immortal, and wise."

Thus reasoned the mighty intellect of this man, until the "magnificence of eternity" opened before him, dimly, indeed, but yet in such a manner that, in view of his own dissolution, he could liken himself unto the swan, whose notes of song were always the sweetest in the moment of death. "So cheerfully," said he, "do I depart this life, *hoping* for the immortal — the imperishable."

So also would we consider the opinions of other philosophers, and the views of different nations, in order to confirm the idea of the *universal belief* of this truth.

Plato and Aristotle taught the same, though less clearly, being inclined to the pre-existence of souls, in order to reconcile things so as to make them admissible to their own minds. "Every soul," says the former, "is immortal. That which is always in motion is from eternity; but that which is moved by another must have an end."

Strabo also recognizes the opinions of Plato, and at the same time acquaints us with his own. When speaking of the Indian Brachmans, he affirms that they, as this philosopher, compose fables of the immortality of the soul, and of judgments in the infernal shades; yet, to me, he says, it seems not to be doubted but the belief of the eternal existence of man's rational soul is fully as ancient as mankind itself.

"For, methinks, the excellency of its own faculties and operations above all material agents should be alone sufficient to afford, to every contemplative man, certain glimpses of both the divine original, and immortality thereof; and the desire of posthumous glory, — an affection congenial and natural to all noble minds, — together with a secret fear of future unhappiness, common to all, to give pregnant hints of its endless existence after death."

Cyrus, king of Persia, has uttered his convictions in this social sort of way: "No, my dear children; I can *never* be persuaded that the soul lives no longer than it dwells in this mortal body, and that it dies on separation; for I see that the soul communicates vigor and motion to mortal bodies during its continuance in them. Neither can I be persuaded that the soul is divested of intelligence on its separation from this gross, senseless body; but it is probable that, when the soul is separated, it becomes perfect and entire, and is then more intelligent."

Passing over a list of illustrious men, whose views coincide, in all important particulars, with those already given, we notice those of Athanasius, who reasons that "the soul of man is intellectual, incorporeal, impassible, immortal substance. The soul moves the body, but is itself moved by nothing else; it follows that it must have a principle of motion within itself, and therefore that it will continue to live and to move of itself after the death and corruption of the body. For the soul cannot die, but it is the body that dies, by reason of the soul's departure from it. But if the soul were moved by the body, it would follow that, when the body which moves it is separated from it, it must die.

"But if the soul moves the body, it must much more move itself; and if it have a principle of motion within itself, it must necessarily live after the death of the body; for the motion of the soul is nothing but the life of the soul.

"Because the soul is immortal, it is naturally capable of un-

derstanding and reasoning about those things which are eternal and immortal. For as the body, because it is mortal, has its senses fitted to perceive fading, mortal things, so the soul, which contemplates and reasons about immortal things, must necessarily be itself immortal, and live forever. For those notions and speculations it has concerning immortality never forsake it, but, still continuing in it, are, as it were, an earnest and foretaste of its future eternity. And from hence it comes to pass that it has naturally, and from itself, an apprehension and knowledge of God, without receiving it by the information and instruction of any one else."

Cyprian, Irenæus, Augustine, and all the venerable fathers of antiquity, concurred in the same doctrine. They contributed *drops*, at least, toward swelling the stream that was flowing on to the ocean of eternal truth. They augmented the force of that resistless current that was sweeping on, even beyond the shores of *time*, losing itself in the untold vastness of eternity's wide sea. Through their influence the channel became broader and deeper, and the preparation for richer waves of blessing more and more perfect. The freight of living souls borne upon its bosom assumed an importance in proportion to the significance given to that mysterious life-principle, "*Everlasting*." They heard the deep-toned voices of Nature, and acknowledged their harmony. Air, earth, sky, and sea, all spoke the same language. The surging waves of their own consciousness gave the same response, and constrained them to cry, "O man, thou art immortal!" and to unite, in some measure, in the ejaculation of Empedocles, "Farewell, all earthly allies. I am henceforth no mortal being, but an immortal angel, ascending up into divinity, and reflecting upon that likeness of it which I find in myself."

Turning from these solitary but influential representatives to the history of nations, and their *general* belief, we find the Egyptians very early contending for the truth of this doctrine. It is true they made the disembodied, indissoluble spirit a

thing to animate the bodies of various inferior orders of creation. The cycles of eternity were to witness perpetual changes in its state and condition, but no decay. On, and still on, it was to live through an inconceivable length of time. Each change was a promotion to a higher degree of blessedness, though the *character* of the blessedness took its coloring from their own imagination.

Similar to this is the Hindoo faith, with its two great systems — the *Dwita* and the *Adwita*, characterized by the distinction of two eternal existences — spirit and matter, and that of *one* only, the *spirit*. The philosophers of the former believe that the soul is but a portion of the divine Spirit united to a portion of matter, and that even *matter* is an emanation from this same Deity.

Under this theory, the existence of the soul, in connection with a material body, is looked upon as a misfortune, and deliverance from this connection the highest bliss. Their idea of supreme felicity is to be absorbed into Deity; to live age after age, while successive transmigrations fit them for a higher position in the scale of being, until they so nearly resemble the sacred character of the Brahma of their devotion, as to be one with him.

What saith the Jewish people? "That man's body was framed by the great Artificer, who, taking earth, fashioned it into a human shape. But the soul was made of no created matter, but proceeded from the Father and Governor of all. For as to what he says, 'He breathed,' &c., nothing else can be meant by it but a divine spirit proceeding and coming from his blessed and spiritual nature, sent into our bodies as into a colony, for the advantage of mankind, who, although as to their visible part they are mortal, yet as to their invisible part are immortal."

The Chinese, Japanese, and Mohammedans were believers in this doctrine, and it was a distinguishing point in the system of religious belief which characterized the Druids, being to

them an incentive to virtuous life, and that which corrected and shaped their views of death.

The inhabitants of the Mariana Islands, too, owning no God, having no conceptions of an infinite cause, seemingly without the least idea of their relation of the spiritual, so blind as to have neither temple nor altar, sacrifice nor priest, yet believed their souls immortal, and that there is a paradise and its opposite.

"The idea of immortality" among the Mexican Indians, says Schoolcraft, "is thoroughly dwelt upon. It is not spoken of as a supposition or a mere belief not fixed. It is regarded as an actuality, as something known and approved by the judgment of the nation. During the long period of my residence and travels in the Indian country, I never knew or heard of an individual who did not believe in it, and the appearance of the body in a future state. No small part of their entire mythology, and the belief that sustains man in his vicissitudes, arise from the anticipation of enjoyment in a future life after the soul has left the body."

Thus far doth human testimony strengthen the belief that

"life forever runs its endless race,
And, like a line, death but divides the space —
A stop which can but for a moment last,
A point between the present and the past."

It is a belief that ever has been, and ever must be, a power in the soul. The *perfection* of that power is reserved for another era than that we are now considering. There is a difference between mythology and theology, of course. One may be conceived in the highest human wisdom, but the other is born of eternal truth, and must stand. The former is like the faint tints that precede the morning dawn; the other like the clearest beams of the midday sun. To assert the necessity of this order of things in the natural world is but to reiterate a fact the commonest minds fail not to receive. We attempt not to argue the same for the moral and spiritual world, but only remark that observation shows it to be thus.

We do not expect people to see as clearly at the dawn of day as at noontide. We expect indistinctness along the whole line of vision in the former case. An object may appear in the distance of uncertain character; but suppose the eyes of many beholding it until all unite in the same conclusion respecting it, should we not rationally accept that conclusion? Would it not be considered folly to dissent when the thing is confirmed by so many? Find we not a parallel in this doctrine of immortality? The voice of the past, of all antiquity, consenteth unto it.

We say not that there have never been those who have denied this fundamental truth. There have been those who have *called*, and professed to *believe*, "death an eternal sleep;" who affirmed that the soul lieth down with the body in everlasting unconsciousness; but so small is the number of these compared with the mass of mankind, and so unsettled their faith notwithstanding their pretensions, it counts but little against the force of the argument, that the doctrine of immortality has been a universal belief.

"If a number of fools," says a writer already quoted, "should think fit to put out their own eyes, to prevent them from feeling the effects of light, as Democritus, the ancient philosopher, is said to have done, it would form no argument to prove that all the rest of the world is blind. And, if a few sceptics and profligates endeavor to blind the eyes of their understanding by sophistry and licentiousness, it cannot prevent the light of reason, which unveils the realities of a future world, from shining on the rest of mankind, nor constitute the slightest argument to prove the fallacy of the doctrine they deny."

CHAPTER II.

THE DESIRE OF CONTINUOUS LIFE AN INHERENT PRINCIPLE
OF MIND.

Yearnings of Childhood. — The Soul's Thirstings. — Fear of Socrates. — Cicero's Instructions to his Pupils. — Dying Testimony of Franklin. — Of Byron. — Universal Action reveals Desire. — Perpetual Longings. — Inferences.

“ Whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Whence this secret dread and inward horror
Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us:
'Tis Heaven itself that points out a hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.”

THUS mused the mind of Cato long ages since — a mind not yet released from the thralldom of superstition, but surrounded, as he himself acknowledges, with “ shadows, clouds, and darkness,” weary, and tortured with conjecture. Wherefore, then, this depth of reasoning but from *intuitions* of that divine something which “ stirs within,” reaching after the *immortal*, and satisfied with nothing but the *Infinite*? As he looked forward, in his efforts to grasp the eternity of thought, and comprehend the endlessness of being, an “ unbounded prospect ” opened before him, and he exclaimed, —

“ Thou pleasing, dreadful thought!
Through what variety of untried being,
Through what new scenes and changes must we pass?
When? Where?”

Multitudes had asked the same questions before him, and manifested the same eager spirit of inquiry. They had been

echoed and re-echoed until sounds had been started whose vibrations were constantly increasing in power—sounds which, according to the theory of some, were to go on eternally in their accumulated strength; but whether this be so or not, they were certainly never to cease until the human soul had found a sure and permanent basis upon which to rest its hopes, and some appropriate aliment to feed its desires. From whence came this anxiety, save by the promptings of the *deathless something* within which ever asserts its claims to immortality, its alliance, and therefore its co-existence, with the Infinite?

But it is not only those who have reached the full maturity of their powers; who have drank large draughts from the cup of pleasure, and found it mingled with gall; who have exulted in the promises of hope, and sorrowed in their non-fulfilment; who have revelled in the sunshine of existence, and anon hid themselves from the gathering cloud;—it is not only these who have experienced all that earth had for them, and, conscious of their speedy emancipation from their prison-house of clay, look forward with solicitude to what yet cometh. We have seen the child of few years, whose youthful cheek was oft traced with tears because she was “*so lonely*” on earth—and that, too, when hope is to life what the dancing sunbeam is to the glittering spray on a summer’s morning—one shielded from every sorrow, so tenderly cherished as never to feel the bitterness of neglect, and yet pining for something above and beyond all to satisfy the yearnings of the soul. What is this but a desire inwoven into the very constitution of spiritual life to drink at a never-failing, ever-satisfying fountain, whose waters have power to quench the thirst that is quenchless elsewhere?

“The human soul,” says Leighton, “thirsts after a good invisible, immaterial, and immortal, to the enjoyment whereof the ministry of a body is so far from being absolutely necessary, that it feels itself shut up and confined by that to which it is now united as by a partition wall, and groans under the pressure of it. Most nations have adopted these sentiments,

though even unable to confirm them with any argument of irresistible force. Yet they felt something within them that corresponded with this doctrine, and looked upon it as most beautiful and worthy of credit." "Nobody shall drive me from the immortality of the soul," says Atticus, in Cicero; and the words of the world-renowned philosopher, Seneca, are expressive of peculiar pleasure relative to views of the soul's eternity and their actual belief. When his sun began to decline, and the remains of a broken constitution only appeared, "I resigned myself," said he, "to so glorious a hope as that of removing into the immensity of time, and into the possession of endless ages."

It is unquestionably true that there is in man a desire for immortality. None can subdue it; not even the despairing wretch who flies to death for succor, and embraces the hope of annihilation as his only refuge. At the very instant when he dreads an immortality which he fears will be miserable, and withdraws himself from a life which he finds so, he wishes there were no such reason for choosing death, and preferring the utter extinction of his being; which is a manifest argument that he hath not yet put off the general desire for immortality. An unconscious betrayal is witnessed in even the professed enemies to the doctrine. Those who have most strenuously sought to put far away all thought and desire for these things, who have taken the idea of annihilation to their closest embrace, have, nevertheless, considered it a very cheerless thing to die when the body dies, — at best, but a "leap in the dark." The most daring infidels have been led to pay their involuntary tribute to the superiority of immortal hopes over their own delusions; for they are continually told of the measureless worth of such hopes, by convictions they cannot stifle, a voice they cannot hush. Nor are they uninfluenced, as we may rationally conclude, by *desires* that the *doubtful* may indeed *be* true. And why can it be subdued? It is coeval with mind, with the principle of life itself.

A modern professor, in speaking of this desire, calls it "not so much a wish for immortality as a fear of death;" an unwillingness to leave cherished purposes unaccomplished, the plans of life unwrought. He would make it an *outgrowth of Christianity*; a power with those whose minds are nurtured, and whose lives are guided, under the influence of these well-founded hopes; and argues that antecedent to the advent of Him who opened "the new and living way," there was no controlling desire to this end.

Of what significance is this language in the mouth of the disciple of Socrates? "We are afraid lest, on the departure of the soul from the body, it should no longer exist, but should perish and be annihilated upon the same day on which a man dies; and, being dispersed immediately on its separation and egress from the body, like a breath or smoke, it should vanish, and have no further being; otherwise, if it existed anywhere independent, concentrated within itself, and removed from the sphere of evil, great indeed and cheering should be the hope that what you say is true." Does not this involve the desire as well as hope? What meaneth this ancient soliloquy?

"O blessed day, when I shall arrive at the divine assembly of souls, when I shall leave this vile crowd and earth behind! for there shall I meet not only those noble Romans whom I just now mentioned, but also my Cato, than whom a more worthy and pious man the world has not known." These declarations of Scipio, "Do you think that I should ever have undergone so many labors, day and night, in the senate and the field, if my glory were to terminate with my life? Would it not have been much better to have spent my days, without labor or contention, in indolence and tranquillity? But my soul lifting herself up, I know not how, always looking forward to posterity, as if, when she shall have departed from the body, she will then at length be but beginning to live. But unless the case be, that our souls are destined to immortality, not that

of any person, however excellent, would thus exert itself for the sake of immortal glory. Let our minds be so disposed as to regard the day of our death as a happy one to ourselves, dreadful as it is to others. Let us rather regard death as a port of safety, to which we are bound; at which we should wish to arrive, with all the sail we can make." And these further admonitions of Cicero: "Be sure, and reckon that it is not you who are mortal, but only your body; for it is not the form and figure that appear, which constitute a man what he is, but it is the mind which is the man; know, then, that thou art a god, at least, if that be a god which lives and has sense; which remembers, and takes care of things to come; which rules, commands, and moves the body over which it is set, as the great God moves, commands, and rules the world. If I mistake in thinking the soul of man to be immortal, I mistake with delight; nor would I have this mistake, with which I am pleased, torn from me as long as I live."

These men, and others of like spirit, stood, in a great measure, the representatives of the people, embodying in their writings, which they have transmitted, the opinions and sentiments of the common mass of mind around them; and was the expression of this desire feeble and infrequent?

What moved the hand of Cleombrotus, the philosopher of Ambracia, to sever the silken cord that bound him to life, when that life was altogether pleasant, but the hope that there was still a better life beyond, and his desire to experience what it had to offer?

What induced Socrates to take, so calmly, the cup of poison from the hand of his Athenian foes, when he knew that under its influence he should lie down with no power to arise again, but his confidence in the future?

Why does the bereaved heart of the untaught heathen look to the funeral pile of the loved as the grave of sorrow, and the point from whence a more desirable existence begins?

Is it not because the *im mortal* finds a response in Nature?

Our own Franklin, as he drew near the close of life, reasoned thus with a friend: "Death is as necessary to the constitution as sleep; we shall rise refreshed in the morning. The course of nature must soon put a period to my present mode of existence. This I shall submit to with the less regret, as, having seen, during a long life, a good deal of this world, I feel a growing curiosity to become acquainted with some other, and can cheerfully, with filial confidence, resign my spirit to the conduct of that great and good Parent of mankind who created it, and who has so graciously protected and preserved me from my birth to the present hour."

There is, indeed, a coolness about this that accords better with the ancients, that is not exactly becoming to a *Christian philosopher*; but it shows how, as steel to the magnet, the soul turns toward and clings to the prospect of a *future*.

Byron, he who sat "on the loftiest top of Fame's dread mountain," had peculiar delight in having recourse to the starry shades of night; to the "dim and solitary loveliness of Nature," where ten thousand voices whispered of resurrection and new existence. There he made his heroes learn the language of another world. Whether he became sufficiently familiar with the dialect himself to appropriate the comforts derived therefrom to his own soul, we cannot tell. The poet makes him die "of *wretchedness*," after having spent a life in the vain attempt

"To fill the embrace of all Eternity
With the unsubstantial shade of Time."

But it is certain that on his death-bed his mind was much occupied with considerations respecting his future destiny, and the claims of Christianity, the principles of which challenged his admiration, and elicited his warmest praise. Among his last words were these: "The thought of living eternally, of again reviving, is a great pleasure."

In proportion as the soul rises to higher degrees of perfection in virtue and moral excellence, according to the cultiva-

tion and expansion of intellect, are the strength and ardor of this desire. Under the influence of more far-reaching thought, the mind conceives and grasps what otherwise seems dim and unsatisfactory. Character becomes shaped by a more perfect model, and actions based on more liberal principles, while aims and purposes are broader and more benevolent. Schemes for the improvement of never-decaying mind become invested with the deepest interest, and the elevation and happiness of future generations an absorbing idea. Effort in this direction has associated with it a large reward. The seed sown will yield an eternal harvest; the edifice reared will exhibit its beautiful proportions through a limitless period.

That this desire is both common and natural "appears from a variety of actions, which can scarcely be accounted for on any other principle, and which prove that the mind feels conscious of its immortal destiny. Why, otherwise, should men be anxious about their reputation, and solicitous to secure their names from oblivion, and to perpetuate their fame, after they have descended into the grave? To accomplish such objects, and to gratify such desires, poets, orators, and historians have been flattered and rewarded to celebrate their actions; monuments of marble and of brass have been erected to represent their persons, and inscriptions engraved in the solid rock, to convey to future generations a record of the exploits they had achieved. Lofty columns, triumphal arches, towering pyramids, magnificent temples, palaces, and mausoleums have been reared to eternize their fame, and to make them live, as it were, in the eyes of their successors, through all the future ages of time. But if the soul be destined to destruction at the hour of death, why should man be anxious about what shall happen or what shall not happen hereafter, when he is reduced to a mere nonentity, and banished forever from the universe of God? He can have no interest in any events that may befall the living world when he is cancelled from the face of creation, and when the spark of intelligence he possessed is quenched in everlasting night."

Did man suppose the grave to be the utmost verge of being, that when he shall lie down to pillow his head upon the cold earth, not only the body will return to its kindred dust, but the spark of consciousness will die out forever, — did he really believe this, would he be content to live and suffer on through threescore years and ten so willingly? — here, where disappointment is coupled with every expectation, deception with every alluring promise of hope, sorrow with every joy, and seasons of pain alternate with brief periods of rest.

When the spirit is sinking under the weight of burdens almost insupportable, and the heart writhing under the influence of necessitous grief, is it not reasonable to suppose that he would wish to escape such unmeaning discipline, and let the waves of oblivion wash out every trace of his being, rather than live on, a crushed and broken thing, with no hope of being lifted up?

Were it his unhesitating belief, it would be inconsistent to do otherwise. But what do we find? — the great majority of mankind clinging with a tenacious grasp to the last remnant of mortal existence; notwithstanding its multiplied ills, bearing them with the hope of a happy exemption from sorrow in a better life; animated through all by the desire of reaching a goodly shore in regions to which they are tending.

This desire of continuous life is the foundation of all desire. All the plans we form are made with reference to it. We do not desire annihilation. Everything within and about us is contrary to it; it is revolting, chilling, antagonistic to the very laws and principles of our being.

As soon as we are capable of forming any wish, it is for enjoyment; and we prize it in proportion to the solidity of its basis, to its capability of affording lasting pleasure.

"Perpetuity of bliss is bliss;" but what concern has it with non-existence? This is the quenching of all things in eternal night; and who regards it but with a shudder?

If one, burdened with a consciousness of guilt, chooses

this drapery of everlasting night, it is not because he courts it of itself, but because the accusing voice of conscience tells him it were better not to be, than to meet the sentence of justice that awaits the unrepentant. But even these wish on, and hope on for something better. None of these but *desire* a happy immortality.

And why is it that men are so anxious to build themselves a reputation that shall go down to posterity? Why any interest in things that shall happen after they are gone?

“The cause is lodged in immortality,”

and amounts to a clear demonstration that man does not *wish*, nor even *suppose*, that the living flame will be extinguished when earth shall cease to minister unto him. None choose to be swept away from all remembrance; to go down to the grave “unpraised, unepitaphed, and leave no whispering of a name on earth:” they turn away from the very idea. Epicurus professed to care little for the life of the soul, yet in the hour of death comforted himself with the assurance that he should live in the memory of those he left behind, and the reputation secured by his philosophical works. So, too, Horace thought that his poems would gain for him an imperishable immortality. Says he, “I have erected a monument more lasting than brass, and loftier than the kingly, elevated pyramids, which not the wasting rain, nor the unrestrained north wind, nor a numberless series of years, nor the flight of time, shall be able to destroy. I shall not wholly die, and a great part of me shall escape the goddess of death.” Thus, unconsciously, they created their own eternity of thought, and left no limit to the power of mind. Under the influence of this desire, Time, with its sweeping scythe, becomes less a remorseless thing, and the *Angel of Death* a messenger whose appearance may be the introduction to a nobler sphere of action.

How many, even in the heathen world, among the philosophers and moralists of antiquity, its poets and orators, have

welcomed the arrow which Death aimed at them, hoping for their souls to be out of prison, and their bodies out of pain!

When Demosthenes had fled for shelter to an asylum from the resentment of Antipater, who had sent Archias to bring him by force, and when Archias promised upon his honor that he should not lose his life if he would voluntarily make his personal appearance, — "God forbid," said he, "that after I have heard Xenocrates and Plato discourse so divinely on the immortality of the soul, I should prefer a life of infamy and disgrace to an honorable death."

The same feeling is apparent in the Indian's death-song, that we have heard sung in our childhood, —

"I shall go to the land where my father has gone,
And he will rejoice at the fame of his son."

But it is not only strong minds that have exhibited this sublime heroism, this beautiful faith. Even the veriest child, who can give no reason for things, talks with confidence of another life, and what it shall do there. Not long since, a little child, upon whom the sun of five successive summers had never shone, was smitten by disease, and the idea of death came to her mind; and what was the language of infancy? "I shall go up into the sky, where God is, and where my little playmate has gone," alluding to one that had died just before her; and this was a child unblest with Christian parents and Christian instruction, whose little feet had never entered the sanctuary or Sabbath school, and consequently limited in her ideas of spiritual things. What could this be but a God-implanted knowledge, and desire to live on forever?

Another child, of ten years, on the boundary of the spirit world, exclaimed, "Sweet sounds come to my ear — far-off music. Papa, I am sure it comes from another land than this. I want to go where it is." And with her childish features irradiated with a peaceful smile, she went.

Verily, this must have been divinely communicated to these

infant souls -- souls that had scarcely known enough of earthly life to know what it meant, much less to comprehend another.

It is evident that this desire forms the mainspring of Christian action in our world; that to this is to be attributed all the worthy records which adorn the annals of the church and the world. On what other principle can we account for the disinterested labors and self-denying exertions of men who have been willing martyrs that they might be instrumental in winning others to a blessed, endless life?

What else could make them so indifferent to their own ease, their bodily comfort, leading them to sacrifice the dearest interests of this life, silence the pleadings of affection, and burst the ties which bind to *country*, *kindred*, and *home*, and all, that they might find those who, with them, should be co-heirs to "an eternal inheritance"?

It is because these and others like them have desired a "*better country*;" because the prospect was so full of glory, that they were willing to do so much to secure for themselves and others a title to the rich possessions in the other world. The stake, the rack, and the prison, all bear witness to the power of this desire to triumph over every form of pain and suffering, and render contemptible the promise of earthly grandeur and renown in the comparison.

Turning from motives of action to the character of the mind itself, we perceive a natural restlessness -- a perpetual yearning after some future good which betokens an immortal nature, or, at least, adds weight to the presumption already adduced.

We may range the wide world over, in vain, to find human beings perfectly satisfied with their present condition and enjoyment. They may have within their reach every kind of gratification, every variety of pleasure; science, wealth, fame, philosophy may all bring their tribute; but, amid the enthusiasm and allurements found in all these, there is a vacuum in the heart that is not yet filled. Like the miser over his hoarded gold, it still cries, "*Give me more.*" The mind looks

forward in anticipation to particular scenes and objects which promise much ; to the acquisition of certain good which will make perfectly happy ; to coming days that will bring the "*good time* ;" but the reality never equals the anticipation, the mind is never satisfied with these things.

Present good, whatever it may be, is comparatively tasteless ; but the relish for something else is always keen. Hence the inordinate cravings for pleasure, the extravagant thirst for novelty, the constant demand for exciting intelligence, so characteristic of mankind.

Instead of sympathizing with the Christian poet, who, in contrasting the momentary space of time with what should come after, gave utterance to the earnest truth, —

" Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long," —

mankind in general make their poetry extend through long lines of thick-clustering wants, which, if granted, there come still others of equal length that alike stop short of the demand, leaving the spirit still pressing eagerly on in quest of something new.

Alexander, the *world's conqueror*, exhibits this principle, though on a larger scale, and with more power than ordinary men are wont to show forth, yet, nevertheless, the same in kind.

His insatiable ambition prompted him to the desire of standing a mighty leader, swaying the sceptre of the world ; and to this end he gathered about him an invincible host, before whose march proud cities trembled and fell, kingdoms were desolated, and the success of his project began to fill him with exultation ; but the words of a philosopher came sounding in his ears, " There is an infinite number of worlds," and the grasping man bowed his head and wept that his conquests were confined to one.

It is true that " the eye can never be satisfied with seeing,

nor the ear with hearing," neither can the soul be satisfied in its desires here; for the deep profound of its nature cannot be understood and filled, save by the hand who created it.

It may sound everything on earth, accumulate every possible variety of treasure, exult in new and valuable discoveries, rejoice in new facts and theories, and the sum of the whole matter will be what Solomon found it, "*vanity of vanities.*" So true is it that "man never *is*, but always *to be*, blest;" that he is a being of unbounded desires; and whence proceeds this want amid such variety? Why is it that relish for present enjoyment is lost in the never-ceasing wish for something more than we do, or ever did, possess?

These things are unanswerable unless the soul lives on, and there be a future life which invites and draws out the capacity of man, answering to those desires, and satisfying those yearnings, which seem so strange if there be no life but this.

These desires, it is evident, are a part of the mind itself — consequently God's own creation; and have they no correspondent objects either in this world or another? Are we to be forever wearying ourselves with the search for good there is not the remotest possibility of attaining, while our natures are wasting away and dying under the influence of the desire?

"Can it be that we are formed with a passionate longing for immortality, and yet destined to perish after this short period of existence?

"We must suppose either that the desire of immortality will be gratified, or that the Creator takes delight in tantalizing his creatures with hopes and expectations which will end in eternal disappointment. To admit the latter supposition would be inconsistent with every rational idea we can form of the moral attributes of the Divinity. It would be inconsistent with his *veracity*; for to encourage hopes and desires which are never intended to be gratified, is the characteristic of a deceiver, and therefore contrary to every conception we can form of the conduct of a 'God of truth.' It would be incon-

sistent with his *rectitude*; for every such deception implies an act of injustice toward the individual who is thus tantalized. It would be inconsistent with his *wisdom*; for it would imply that he has no other means of governing the intelligent creation than those which have a tendency to produce fallacious hopes and fears in the minds of his rational offspring.

"It would be inconsistent with his *benevolence*; for as 'the desire accomplished is sweet to the soul,' so disappointed hopes uniformly tend to produce misery. Yet the benevolence of the Deity, in every other point of view, is most strikingly displayed in all his arrangements in the material universe, and toward every species of existence."

Turning from man to the lower orders of creation, we find the means for gratification of want equal to want itself. Following the promptings of instinct, they have no wish to go beyond the boundary it prescribes. They have no fears and apprehensions for the future, no hopes and anxieties, but simply a satisfied living in just the state where God placed them. They have no mental constitution to which the law of development applies. What pleases them one day will please them another, and still another, and so on until the day of their death, which they meet indifferently and unconcernedly.

The fish in the sea desires nothing but its own watery element to make it happy. The demands of its whole existence are met in the liquid world in which it moves. So the bird of the air will spread her protecting wing over the little brood in her curiously wrought nest, and sing the livelong day, content in living. The bee constructs her waxen cell with never an attempt to do anything different, and the little creatures that cross our path in the woods unconcernedly do just what the guidings of instinct make them do. Thus it is with the whole animal creation. The organs with which nature has furnished them are all-sufficient for their purpose; they neither seek nor desire others. It is only man that is never satisfied; only he who oversteps the boundaries of time, and stands up to

ask, "If I die, shall I live again?" And why? In the one case is *Godlike reason*, in the other *feeble instinct*; in one the measureless capacity of a thinking soul, in the other but animal life that dies out with the breath.

The benevolent Governor of the universe has made ample provision for the happiness of his irrational creatures; and shall man — the noblest of his works, the subject of such varied discipline, gifted with wonderful faculties — die like them?

To suppose this would be to place him lower than the lowest orders of creation, and admit a design altogether too unworthy for even our feeblest conceptions of the divine character. It seems more rational, therefore, to conclude that this world is not the final destination of man, but that, beyond this sublunary scene, there is a state that answereth to the strongest desires of the human soul, where it may "rest and expatiate" forever.

CHAPTER III.

ASPIRATIONS FOR MENTAL AND MORAL PERFECTION.

Nature of the Soul. — Opinions of different Nations and Writers. — Power of Mind over Matter. — Influence of Disease. — Varied Capacity of Mind. — The mightiest never satisfied. — Influence of Science. — Obstacles to intellectual Greatness. — Limitless Objects.

“Mind is God’s first end.” — CHANNING.

“How complicate, how wonderful, is man!
Midway from nothing to the Deity!
A beam ethereal, sullied and absorpt!
Though sullied and dishonored, still divine!
Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
O, what a miracle to man is man!”

WHO can fathom the deep profound of man’s nature? What has logic, philosophy, or even “star-eyed science” to do with these mysterious depths? *Depths* did we say? It has *heights* none of them can ever reach. No! not by their keenest, clearest vision, nor their highest, most perfected art. We may reason about the substance and essence of the soul, its union with and control over the material, making the most “refined thought able to actuate the grossest matter;” and yet, with all our reasonings, all our theories, we have not passed the boundary of conjecture. The strangest possible ideas have been advanced by different people and nations respecting it. Some have made it a *subtile air*, whose composition is made up of minute particles; others have maintained that *thinking* is the essence of spirit; and others still, like the Stoics, have made it a flame, or portion of heavenly light. So varied, too, are all their views relative to its situation. The brain, the stomach, heart, and blood have all been awarded the honor of furnishing

a seat for this distinguished guest. Strabo gave it a more prominent position by placing it "between the eyebrows," while Aristotle allowed it the range of the whole body. Thus was the spiritual so grossly compounded with the material as to make it no very far-fetched idea to suppose it of kindred nature and duration with the latter.

"Whether it is lodged in the brain," says one, "or whether it looks out at every pore, I know not; but this I am willing to believe—that it does exist in the body, and will exist when the body is returned to earth;" and "were we empowered," says another, "by a secret wish, to remove mountains, or control the planets in their orbits, this extensive authority would not be more extraordinary, nor more beyond our comprehension," than this union of soul and body, than which all Nature furnishes no more mysterious principle.

Although demonstrative certainty cannot be reached with reference to the *nature* of mind, we can yet trace its *operations*, and let cause and consequence bring their own elucidations to the confirmation of the subject before us, which is, that the aspirations of mind for a higher state of perfection and more extended knowledge, together with the fact that appropriate faculties and ever-increasing power of acquisition are given, are evidence that these powers will open to a more full development in another life.

"*Man is an intellectual being*," is an every-day assertion. He has a power of thought, and desire for knowledge, that are so essentially a part of his mental constitution he cannot divest himself of it. The stream from its mountain source goes on in accumulated strength and force, though obstacles arise here and there to obstruct its progress. It will take a different course, seek out a new channel, for its tendencies are onward, and by an inevitable law it must proceed. So with mind: no effort of the will, no hinderance from material surroundings, can prevent its onward course. "On and still on," is its motto. It is always eager for what is to be known, what is coming.

It is true there is an intimate sympathy between the soul and the body, between the spiritual and the material, as they are united, so that one does affect the other in a manner we know not how. The materialist may obtrude his narrow views, and tell us to the contrary; but we are irresistibly led to the conclusion that mind is an independent spiritual substance, and the body an "*extraneous something*" to the man—only the "house he lives in."

Bowen, speaking of this close but temporary union, observes that, "Viewed at any one moment, however close and intimate the union may appear, the body still seems to show its ministerial character, and to acknowledge in every part the sovereignty of one undivided and separate will. Sensation extends to every part of it; every fibre is instinct with life; and the dominion of the will is absolute and immediate over every muscle and joint, as if the whole fabric and its tenant were one homogeneous system. The mind tires not of its supremacy, and is not wearied with the number of volitions required to keep every joint in action, and every organ performing its proper function. It would not delegate the control of the fingers to an inferior power, nor contrive mechanical or automatic means for moving the extremities. Within its sphere, it is sole sovereign, and is not perplexed with the variety and constant succession of its duties, extending to every part of the complex structure of which it is the animating and directing spirit. Sensation is not cumbered with the multitude of impressions it receives, nor is the fineness of perception dulled by repeated exercise. The sharpness of its edge rather improves by use, and we become more heedful of its lightest intimations.

This improvement, however, is wholly of the inner sense, the man's capacity being enlarged, while the external organ which is his instrument—the eye, for instance—is often injured, and sometimes destroyed, by excessive or unguarded use.

"It does not appear," says Bishop Butler, "that the relation of this gross body to the reflecting being is in any degree

necessary to thinking — to our intellectual enjoyments or sufferings; nor, consequently, that the dissolution or alienation of the former by death will be the destruction of those present powers which render us capable of this state of reflection."

In illustration of this point, he cites the instance of a young man who was attacked by that terrible disease the physicians call ankylosis, or stiffening of the joints, at the time when anticipations of entering active life and the duties of manhood are strongest. "First one knee refused its office; and as this was accompanied with great pain, and perhaps the nature of the complaint was mistaken, the leg was amputated, in the hope that the evil would stop there. But the disease soon passed into the other limb, stiffened the remaining knee, and then crept on slowly from joint to joint, making each inflexible as it passed, till the whole lower portion of the body was nearly as rigid as iron, and the muscles had no longer any office to perform.

"Gradually, then, it moved upward, leaving the vertebral column inflexible; the arms and hands, which, in anticipation of its approach, had been bent into a position most convenient for the sufferer, stiffened there; the neck refused to turn or bend, and the body became almost as immovable as if it had been carved out of the rock. Years passed between the first appearance of the disease and this awful completion of its work; years elapsed after the hapless patient was thus hardened into stone; and still he lived. Nor was this all: his eyes were attacked; the sight of one was wholly lost, and the other became so exquisitely sensitive that it could seldom be exposed to the light, and never but a few moments at a time. And thus he remained for years, blind, immovable, prisoned in this house of stone, and echoing, we might suppose, the affecting exclamation of the apostle, 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' But no word of impatience escaped him: the mind was clear and vigorous, the temper was not soured, the affections were as strong and clinging as ever.

"His good sense, his wit, his knowledge of books, his interest in the passing topics of the day, made his chamber a favorite resort even of those who might not have been drawn thither merely by sympathy for his sufferings; for, not infrequently, he was still exposed to agonizing pain. But, in the intervals of this distress, his active mind sought and found employment, and numerous contributions, which *this living statue* dictated for a periodical, are now in print;" and, "What," he asks, in conclusion, "says the materialist to a case like this? Was that powerless *body*, maimed, stiffened, blind, hardly animate, — was *that* the person, the *man*, still active, inquisitive, industrious, generous, and affectionate? or was it only a prison-house, in which the fettered soul was compelled to await its time of release? I envy not the feelings or the intellect of him," he continues, "who could stand by the bedside of that patient sufferer, and still disbelieve that 'there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.'"

A similar case has come under our own observation — of a young man in like circumstances, who, though his body became as an adamantine structure about him, yet indulged in the pleasures of imagination, and exulted in hope, seemingly with as much freedom and joyousness as ever. Thought kept on her endless circuit untiringly.

His "house" was strongly assailed, well nigh destroyed, but the tenant within looked out and said, "I live, and have capacious wants; therefore give me food: my power to endure, my faculty to receive, still remain; therefore minister to the necessities of my nature."

We will not say that these powers are as strong, and admit of the same degree of cultivation, as they would under other circumstances; for this would be to destroy the sympathetic link between the material and the immaterial, of which we have already spoken, the truth of which our own experience corroborates, and observation confirms.

What we would now affirm is, that *mind makes the man*;

and it is this that continually longs for knowledge, for fuller and more perfect development, — therefore it becomes evident that a material frame is in no way fitted for the eternal home of the spirit. “Even if man,” says one writer, “had continued morally perfect, there would probably have been much of imperfection incident to his physical nature.”

The spirit, happy in the consciousness of purity, would yet have panted for clearer views, larger knowledge, and more intimate fellowship with its Maker. The eye would have beamed with the hope of a brighter existence, and the mind would have expanded in the anticipation of communion with the unseen. Enoch walked with God so intimately that death seemed afraid to shake at him his dreadful dart; yet he could not be left to immortality on earth; but, as if the body were no sphere for such purity and cultivation, “he was not, for God took him.”

Why this progressive nature of mind, this vast capacity of intellect, these limitless powers, and equally limitless subjects that invite the exercise of these powers? How varied are these, and how admirably fitted are all the senses to receive knowledge — so many avenues to the inner storehouse, whose receptive power is wonderful!

The sublimest objects that can occupy the mind come through the sense of vision; and loftier ideals can scarcely be conceived than are presented by Nature in the magnificence of her power.

The eye can not only take in every feature of beauty in the surrounding landscape, embrace the thousand objects that arise between it and the farthest horizon, but it pierces the heights above and the depths below in quest of some new form of beauty, some new discovery in science, or contribution to art. It traces the motion of mighty worlds as they roll in their distant orbits, defines the position and power of the myriad sparkling forms that gem the nightly concave, though they fill regions so remote, —

“That their swift beams — the swiftest things that be —
Have travelled centuries on their flight to earth.”

Again, its microscopic gaze is directed to the countless forms that live, move, and act in their own appropriate world—a drop of water; but we cannot speak the fractional part of that which delights the soul through the medium of this sense.

All the other senses are fitted, in like manner, to extend the range of knowledge, and enhance the capacity of enjoyment. A thousand pleasing melodies and grateful odors minister to organs just fitted to appreciate their ministrations; and if there be special need or desire in any direction, the means of fitting culture are at hand. There are beautiful harmony and proportion in all; and is there no significance in this?

Look, too, at the understanding of man, as the external senses pour in their golden tribute to aid in the formation of ideas and sentiments, and see if there be any end to his power to grasp them.

See how, under its influence, Science has shed her benignant rays, and the application of her laws to practical life sent a wave of blessing and consequent thrill of joy over the whole world; how sublimity of discovery and nobleness of invention have shed new light, and brought new value to everything below the sun, as well as in the heavens above.

Man, seemingly, cannot be satisfied without seeking to explore every foot of this "terrestrial ball."

Untraversed waters are no barrier to his desire to visit continents upon the other side, islands in remotest seas, and nothing deters him from pushing on to the region of ice and everlasting snows, to see what God has placed in that somewhat dubious corner of his universe—the *North Pole*. Things must be likewise settled as to its southern counterpart, and what is there. His explorations lead him into the bosom of earth, and down to the bottom of oceans, to see the characteristics of that floor which the Creator laid so long ago. He arranges and classifies the infinite variety of vegetables, minerals, and animals which earth contains, analyzes the invisible atmosphere with which it is surrounded, determines the

elementary principles of which it is composed, discovers the nature of thunder, arrests the rapid lightning in its course, ascertains the laws by which the planets are directed in their courses, weighs the masses of distant worlds, and explores regions of the universe, invisible to the unassisted eye, and whose distance exceeds all human calculation and comprehension.

By his ever-active ingenuity he has sent out floating masses, like to "things of life," over every sea and ocean, whose motion is guided and course directed by curious instruments, making his path certain over the threatening wave and white-crested billow. He can also construct that which will bear him, an aerial voyager, above the regions of the clouds; send thought, with the rapidity of lightning, whithersoever he will; take not only him, but multitudes of his companions, with strange velocity, from one portion of the land to another. He can look back over the history of the past, and trace the moral bearings of every revolution and event that have agitated the world since its commencement; he can scan minutely the present aspect of all nations; but is he satisfied with this? His restless desires would lead him to gather shells on every shore, cull flowers in every clime, and witness life in its every manifestation.

"His eye must see, his foot each spot must tread,
Where sleeps the dust of earth's recorded dead;
Where rise the monuments of ancient time,
Pillar and pyramid in age sublime;
The pagan's temple and the churchman's tower;
War's bloodiest plain and wisdom's greenest bower;
Where Socrates once taught he thirsts to stray;
Where Homer poured his everlasting lay;
From Virgil's tomb he longs to pluck one flower,
By Avon's stream to live one moonlight hour;
To pause where England 'garners up' her great,
And drop a patriot's tear to Milton's fate:
Fame's living masters, too, he must behold,
Whose deeds shall blazon with the best of old;
Nations compare, their laws and customs scan,
And read, wherever spread, the *book of man*."

But all this does not satisfy. The most faithful student of the cyclopædia of human knowledge still desires something more, finding his receptive powers so far from being exhausted, that they move with greater activity. Sir Isaac Newton, during a great part of his life, was engaged in the most profound investigations that had ever claimed the attention of the human mind. In answer to his eager and patient inquiries, Nature disclosed the secret springs by which she moved her delicate and complicated machinery, and the sublimest discoveries were made known to the world. Light was thrown upon things which hitherto had been shrouded in Cimmerian gloom, and the consequence was an enlightening influence through all the earth.

This richly-freighted mind went on from one degree of attainment to another, from one height of knowledge to another, until, nearing the boundary of his mortal existence, he was warned that his labors must cease. Was this the end of desire? So far did all his knowledge seem to come short of the vastness and magnificence of what was to be known, that it appeared to him like gathering a few pebbles on the shore, while the "great ocean of undiscovered truth" lay before him.

It is always thus with those who drink the deepest of philosophy—they dream of other springs and talk of other fountains than those they have seen, desiring to know if their waters boast any different properties, any new elements, wherewith they may cool the fever of their minds.

The mighty mind of Baron Humboldt did not know enough to satisfy him, if we may so speak; nor do the strongest, boldest, and most daring flights of intellect meet the demands of this grasping nature of ours.

The surface of the earth becomes tame, and man penetrates beyond the limits of all that is visible in the immense canopy of heaven, and ranges amidst "the infinity of unknown systems and worlds, dispersed throughout the boundless regions of creation," and, weary with the mute eloquence of Nature, he would

have a voice break upon his ear, teaching him that which always has been, and still remains, unteachable.

The glimpse obtained starts numberless inquiries, and we hear him saying, —

“Tell me, ye splendid orbs, as from your thrones
 Ye mark the rolling provinces that own
 Your sway, what beings fill those bright abodes;
 How formed, how gifted; what their power, their state,
 Their happiness, their wisdom. Do they bear
 The stamp of human nature? Or has God
 Peopled those purer realms with lovelier forms
 And more celestial minds? Does Innocence
 Still wear her native and untainted bloom?
 Or has Sin breathed his deadly blight abroad,
 And sowed corruption in those fairy bowers?
 Has War trod o’er them with his foot of fire?
 And Slavery forged his chains? and Wrath, and Hate,
 And sordid Selfishness, and cruel Lust,
 Leagued their base bands to tread out Light and Truth,
 And scattered woe where Heaven has planted joy?
 Or are they yet all Paradise, unfallen
 And uncorrupt; existence one long joy,
 Without disease upon the frame, or sin
 Upon the heart, or weariness of life;
 Hope never quenched, and age unknown,
 And death unfeared; while fresh and fadeless youth
 Glows in the light from God’s near throne of Love?
 Open your lips, ye wonderful and fair!
 Speak, speak! the mysteries of those living worlds
 Unfold!”

But, notwithstanding the intensity of desire and eagerness of inquiry, there is ever heard the despairing cry, “*No language.*” There they shine in all their glory, as they were placed by the hand of the Infinite, in the “circle of the heavens,” bewildering the mind of man by the immensity of the scene; but what forms of sensitive and intellectual life, what diversity of scenery, what peculiar exhibitions are witnessed there, man has never known. Not but that he has tried to “pry the folded leaves,” but because on all has been written *everlasting silence*.

The curious eye of scientific observation has, indeed, deter-

mined the size and distances of the planets ; made various and sublime discoveries ; but all these, in all probability, are as nothing in comparison with the undiscovered and undiscoverable things which yet remain. Man will need an immortal eye-glass for these things, formed of material too delicately fine, too magnificently powerful, for human construction or operation.

Is it true that worlds and systems of worlds still hang suspended throughout the illimitable tracts of creation, that are never to be known ?

God, in the course of his providence, has directed the human mind to the contemplation and study of these things, and furnished it with requisite endowments for the prosecution of the work, thus making his will and intention apparent that the glories of his creation should be opened, partially at least, to human view.

It is natural for us to suppose his universe was intended to display his perfections, shadow forth his power, and afford gratification and the means of happiness to the intellectual beings he had formed. "The Creator stands in no need of innumerable assemblages of worlds and of inferior ranks of intelligences, in order to secure or augment his felicity. Innumerable ages before the universe was created, he existed alone, independent of every other being, and infinitely happy in the contemplation of his own eternal excellences. No other reason, therefore, can be assigned for the production of the universe, but the gratification of his rational offspring, and that he might give a display of the infinite glories of his nature to innumerable orders of intelligent creatures. Ten thousand times ten thousand suns, distributed throughout the regions of immensity, with all their splendid apparatus of planets, comets, moons, and rings, can afford no spectacle of novelty to expand and entertain the Eternal Mind, since they all existed, in their prototypes, in the plans and conceptions of the Deity, during the countless ages of a past eternity."

Creation, then, we may suppose as a grand theatre for the display of almighty power and wisdom, and the elevation and perfection of the race of beings the Creator has made the objects of his fostering care. Will these, so amply provided with faculties for acquiring and treasuring knowledge, and this to an indefinite extent, — will these be finally and eternally disappointed in their desires and attempts?

Were there no other world but this, it would be easier to suppose that man was made to "grovel here below." Science would be comparatively limited in such a case, and man, during his threescore years and ten, might study into the laws which regulate the little ball he inhabits, experience his quota of suffering and enjoyment, and then, weary with the narrow round, and seeing no further scope for exercise, his languishing powers and feeble energies might die out and cease to be.

But it is not so. What is spread out before the mind, inviting its study, invoking its attention with ceaseless importunity, is nothing less than infinite. It is immensity so vast, we are lost in the attempt to conceive even a small part of it. It is sublime beyond all the power of the loftiest imagination to paint; possessing a grandeur inconceivably above the most glowing conception which the most gifted genius has ever formed.

Every new discovery paves the way for another. Every improvement that adds to the perfection of the telescope reveals new wonders in the starry heavens, and unfolds that which is rich in its suggestions of immortality. The mighty counsels of the Eternal seem manifest, and we exclaim, Surely man was not "bound to the surface of this pygmy globe." Man, with his colossal powers of mind, his ever-expanding appreciative faculties, was never made for an assigned period, though that period be ages we could never count.

There is no limit to his capacity for acquiring and treasuring knowledge. He never knows so much but that he may know

more. He has never garnered so much but that there is room for more. Those who have been reaping the longest, — who have been busy from the morning till the twilight of existence, and have gathered the greatest harvest, — even they are anxious to secure still larger sheaves for the mental storehouse, the capacity of which increases in proportion to the amount committed to it.

And would this capability of indefinite expansion have been made to exist only to torture and to tantalize? — to find its full end in a round of physical gratification and inferior delight?

Would so glorious a work have been set before the human mind, with so many inducements to prosecute it, — the requisite ability and energy given, and the time alone denied?

Earth allows the opportunity of learning scarcely more than the preface to the great volume prepared by the Infinite Author. Truths are traced upon its pages with inimitable power and skill. Its chapters are such as no mortal can pen; its illustrations and images are divine; its delineations true as Truth itself; its exhortations are earnest, its appeals effective, and its style, in beauty and attractiveness, beyond comparison. Its type is the type of heaven; the publisher, God himself; his agents, the mighty elements, who celebrate the merits of this divinely-wrought combination with unwearied tongue; and all for the benefit of man. And is this to be the offspring of a day? Rather, is not *immortality* stamped upon every line? Man, at the end of his race, has only disciplined his powers to commence this study. A thousand contingent and untoward circumstances conspire to prevent the full and vigorous exercise of his intellectual powers during his earthly stay. How seldom do we find uninterrupted devotion to these objects of thought and study for any considerable length of time! It matters not if one be wedded to the pursuit of science — if he find it congenial to his taste to be exclusively employed in this manner; in the midst of his darling projects and most cherished theories, business and care will intrude their unwelcome visages, and

demand their due. Next, animal nature will suggest the desirableness, and not only this, the necessity, of attending to its claims. The clamorous voice of appetite will be heard above all, and, in the general turmoil, will come a suspension of intellectual effort; and, when it is resumed, it will be found that in the chain the mind had been weaving some links are either gone or broken.

There is a general idea of a perfect chain to be wrought out somewhere and somehow; but the contradictory opinions, jarring interests, and wayward passions of men make such a scene of strife and confusion, there is no harmonious working. There is so much of pride and envy, so much of malice and prejudice, we are so ready to deceive ourselves with what is false and unreal, so inclined to listen to the seductive voice of soft-toned Ease, and turn aside to the bowers of Indolence, that we unfit ourselves for the work almost unconsciously. We court temptation and lament it. We woo these hindrances, and then as surely deplore their serpent-like embrace. Something like this is more or less characteristic of all mortal progress. Besides, our physical powers so soon faint under the pressure of intense application, and the intellectual is so many times obliged to succumb to the physical, that the progress is small at best.

There have been instances on record of great progress by minds of a high order and genius of a clear vision; but, as we have said before, such are not inclined to spend their time in congratulating themselves, from their elevated stand-point, on what they have gained; but so much more lies before them, — the goal they would reach is so far in the distance, — that the past is lost in the hopeful future. So diversified and inviting are the scenes of which they have caught a glimpse, that they stretch forward with eagerness to grasp new discoveries, and desery some new openings through which light may beam upon them from the regions of infinity. They would be delighted participants in things of a more exalted sphere — the happier recipients of diviner knowledge.

But the book is not so soon learned ; no time but that which shall run parallel with the endless procession of suns and constellations in the universe will be sufficient to learn it. No life but an unending one will be long enough to look upon all the wonders of creative power ; "to lift the veil from the beautiful mysteries which burn along the infinite abysses," and show to the exulting pupil all the *Great Teacher* has marked out for him.

So varied and wonderful are the displays of divine power and wisdom, that the cycles of eternity might run their endless round, the soul have its energies constantly enlisted, and yet never arrive at a point in its history when it would cease to find something new to excite its interest, and call forth its admiration. These things, and the fitness of man to engage in them, also his aspirations for more extended knowledge, warrant, at least, the *supposition* that he is destined to an immortal existence.

But it is not simply knowledge that these aspirations are confined to — they seek a higher state of perfection.

The perfect has a charm for every mind. No phase of actual life realizes man's ideal ; no attainment reaches his imaginary standard. Perfection is the bright cynosure of life. Hence writers invest their characters with virtues in clusters. Nothing was ever found like them in any mortal that ever crossed their path. Like the painter who blended in one the charms of several in order to produce his ideal form of beauty, so these writers cull here and there from the flowers that adorn the borders of humanity, and tying up the choice garland, ask the world to come and see the faultless beauty of earth. They have left the nightshade to itself, and all things similar to it, for their bouquet should be unmingled fragrance. It is but a principle of human nature to reject the bitter and retain the sweet — to leave the imperfect and seek the perfect.

We desire perfect health and enjoyment, perfect friendship and confidence, and so through the whole catalogue of loves,

hopes, feelings, and passions. So in every department of the business world. The artist must have a perfect model; the manufacturer must have perfect machinery; the miser perfect security; and, indeed, through all ranks perfection is the grand aim.

We would be better and purer in nature, having more self-control, more disinterestedness, more of every quality that elevates and blesses the spirit. There is seldom a time but that we long to be better, secretly at least, if we blush to make the open acknowledgment. But notwithstanding the most persistent efforts, and the most lofty aspirings of mind and heart, perfection is never reached. Imperfection is here stamped upon man, and all that man does; and is this vain sighing and longing to be the portion of God-created spirits?

"Brutes are not haunted and disquieted by the desire of an ideal felicity which they cannot find; man only sighs after an image of infinite perfection, that can be realized only in God; aspires to his native skies, with as natural a tendency as that by which the flame ascends. Man appears to be the only being on earth to whose nature and faculties his present state is not commensurate. Every other creature completes its destiny — attains the utmost end of its faculties. Man alone is always progressive, interminably advancing in his conceptions and achievements; yet he is always cut off in the midst of his work; he is never permitted to complete a single science."

Surely there must be a world where the full significance of completion will be realized. The Infinite Creator, complete in himself, must surely delight in the completion of his works everywhere, especially in man, his best and noblest work.

"There is not, in my opinion," says Crecch, an eloquent writer, "a more pleasing and triumphant consideration in religion than this — the perpetual progress which the soul makes toward the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at a period in it. To look upon the soul as going on from strength to strength; to consider that she is to shine for-

ever with new accessions of glory, and brighten to all eternity, that she will be still adding virtue to virtue, and knowledge to knowledge, carries in it something wonderfully agreeable to that ambition which is natural to the mind of man."

These desires and aspirations, this capacity and this infinitude of display, are indeed full of meaning. They are prophetic of *immortality*, and strongly suggest the idea that

"in other days,
When death shall give the encumbered spirit wings,
Its range shall be extended ;"

that perchance it shall roam among vast mysterious spheres, —

"pass from orb to orb, and dwell in each,
Familiar with its children, learn their laws,
And share their state, and study and adore
The infinite varieties of bliss
And beauty, by the hand of Power divine
Lavished on all its works."

CHAPTER IV.

MORAL PERCEPTIONS PRESUPPOSE A FUTURE.

Man as an Intellectual Being. — Heart-Culture. — Flowers and Icebergs. — The Inner Light. — The Moral Virtues. — Influence of Love — of Friendship. — Examples of Moral Heroism. — Strong Presumption of the Continuance of Moral Powers in a more perfect State.

Observe God's plan — "On all he *moral worth* Bestowed, and moral tribute asked from all." — *Pollok.*

MAN is an intellectual being, exalted by reason and judgment far above all the highest forms of animal life; but when we have said this, have we completed the description of human nature? Is it enough simply to say that he is "endowed with reason and foresight, free to act, and able to learn through experience what actions will most effectually promote his present and future happiness?" "The consciousness of every individual will answer," says Bowen, "that it is not all; that there *is an element of our nature which excels prudence more than prudence excels animal instinct or passion.* This principle extends its jurisdiction over our whole being, claiming authority to control and subdue the promptings of self-love as absolutely as it overrules the appetites and desires. By the side of prudence, or above it, it introduces the novel conception of duty, or moral obligation; over personal happiness, as an object of effort and a guide to action, it places the idea of absolute right. Putting aside the consideration of external things, it erects its throne in the soul of man, and judges, not the outward act, but the motives and intentions which lead to it, and constitute its moral character.

"*Dealing thus exclusively with conceptions of the intellect, or pure ideas, all contingency or uncertainty disappears from its decisions, and the sentence which it pronounces is as unchangeable as the purposes of the Almighty. It supplies the medium and the standard of judgment through which we regard our own conduct and that of our fellow-beings, and form our notions of the attributes of God. Here, then, is the proper foundation of natural religion. Natural theology, which is the product of the intellect, makes us acquainted with the being and the natural attributes of the Deity, such as his infinite duration, power, and wisdom, merely as facts of science, or truths for contemplation. Natural religion, proceeding from conscience, makes known to us his moral nature, his purposes and will, and so terminates, not in knowledge, but in action ;*" and man, it is evident, is formed not only for contemplation, but for action. He is eminently and of necessity an active being. He has powers, principles, instincts, feelings, and affections woven into the very constitution of his nature, which prompt him to ceaseless efforts in virtuous attainment for his own good, and to exertions for the happiness of others, according to his perfection of moral taste and sense of moral obligation.

These powers, principles, and feelings are capable of indefinite expansion, like those of mind. They are subject to kindred laws, exercise and progression being as closely linked in the one case as in the other.

Hence we are wont to call that system of education sadly deficient which does not include the culture and development of the moral faculties, as well as those of the intellect.

Said a student in one of our literary institutions, in a conversation upon this subject, "We are wonderfully devoted to intellect. We leave no means untried that will enhance its power and brilliancy.

"Our professed aim, from beginning to end, is to fit our mental machinery to be used with power and effect in the work

of reclaiming a world from error, superstition, and sin; but we daily neglect that which is to be the magic spring to move the whole — the improvement and perfection of the moral element." Harmony of action, and therefore effectiveness, can only be secured by the union and wise coöperation of both.

Sparkling scintillations of mind may dazzle and bewilder, for a while, by the magnificence of theory and the sublimity of idea; but a mere intellectual man is a frigid iceberg, and he is never softened until he drinks at the overflowing fountain of the heart, and bathes himself in the refreshing, invigorating streams of charity, sympathy, and love that flow therefrom. Flowers blossom all along the margin of these streams, and man never appears more thoroughly great than when he takes these to his bosom, that their sweet fragrance may lend a charm to his whole nature. Never does he seem to be more worthily employed than when engaged in cultivating and tending this spot in God's moral universe; for it is capable of becoming a scene of rare beauty, and yielding the richest return for all labor expended upon it. Too often, alas! we perceive only dwarfed plants, where the eye should be feasted with luxuriant growth. In the northern part of our hemisphere are regions of everlasting snow, where icy mountains erect an insurmountable barrier to the march of man; but even here the sun looks kindly down, and at the foot of some of these mountains are little patches of green, and little, timid, sensitive flowers open their eyes to a strange yet glad existence. As far as the daring spirit of man has ventured, he has found these children of the snow, and always hailed them with inexpressible delight, for they were full of joyous meaning, the harbingers of pleasant thought.

Too much like these isolated gems of the north are the moral virtues in our hearts. We cultivate them — if we bestow any culture at all — in little patches, at the foot of the lofty mountain of intellect, while we ought to bring them out from the shade, and let them rise in their own graceful proportion under

the influence of the full blaze of truth, and divinely-generated heat. We love symmetry and beauty everywhere. We love such objects in Nature — much more a beautiful, symmetrical character ; and this, as we have said, cannot be attained but by the God-intended combination of the moral and intellectual.

" 'Tis moral grandeur," said Young, "that makes the mighty man"; and not only is it the source of power, but of true nobility. Under its influence life is invested with new solemnity, and the obligations of man take a wider scope.

Conscience — the voice of God in the soul — by its counsels ever points to the path of duty and of right. It stands, like a faithful sentinel, upon the walls of our being ; now saying *proceed*, and anon cautioning us to *beware* lest that which the moral nature hath need of be lost, and that which would prove its detriment be received.

It is in our power, by hearkening to this voice, to make it still more eloquent in its pleadings ; by listening to its tones, to make them still more gently persuasive in winning us to a better and holier life ; and life that does not involve progress in goodness is not to us a desirable form of existence. We instinctively reject it, as not admitting the existence of those qualities which now constitute the true ornament and dignity of human nature, and as making no provision for their cultivation, even if they did exist. A more authoritative principle than self-love declares to us, that the practice of virtue is higher than the pursuit of enjoyment, that holiness is more desirable than happiness, and that the divine government, in so far as it shows infinite justice and benevolence combined, and affords scope for progress and effort as well as for the gratification of desires ending in self, is in truth the noblest conceivable expression of the wisdom and goodness of God. Conscience ever reiterates this as she sits upon her throne, but we attempt no metaphysical argument as to the nature and functions of conscience, the mysterious operations of the human will, or the lofty and abstract principles which have

caused so much controversy among moralists and philosophers, for this is not to our purpose.

It sits an "*undoubted sovereign*" in the sanctuary of the soul, with a delegated power from the hand of the Creator; and while the other moral faculties are amenable to it, itself stands amenable to its own divine source.

The early history of our colonies was distinguished by the doings of a sect which *deified* conscience, as it were. This "*inner light*" to them was the grand, central sun of the moral hemisphere, and the degree of man's illumination was in proportion to the extent to which he threw open the door of his soul, and let this light of heaven in. They gave to *it* the prerogative which belongs only to *Him* who made it.

There is a sense in which it stands as the *light of heaven* to mortal man; but we advert to moral distinctions only as presumptive proof of the immortal destiny of man.

All our ideas of the divine economy are contrary to the supposition that so precious a thing as this moral wealth should be wasted; that God should regard it with such jealous care and tender interest if "an inch or two of time" was all it could boast.

How idle to talk of the perfection of the moral nature if there be not another life. *Perfect* a thing for *nonentity*! It is absurd — we need not say it. Fitness of means to ends characterizes all God's works in Nature; and shall there be lamentable disproportion in the highest part of creation? We trow not. Behold how richly God hath endowed the moral nature of man; how strong a principle is Love — "*stronger than death*;" therefore, in the struggle with the last enemy, shall not the victory belong to it?

What hath not Love wrought? Who can count up her deeds, and tell their influence upon a degenerate world? Who can gather up the broken hearts and bruised spirits she has bound up and cared for, number the desponding ones she has encouraged, the sad she has comforted, the degraded she

has raised, the outcasts she has reclaimed, and the prodigals she has made to return home in penitence?

Who can measure the amount of those rich libations she has poured out for mankind in kind looks, soothing words, and beneficent acts, or estimate the value and power of those societies she has caused to be built upon her own true basis? Ah, there are

“tales of holy marvels done
By strong affection, of deliverance won
Through its prevailing power.”

Everything that is rich and rare, pure and holy, joyous and glad, has been used to symbolize this blessed principle of the moral world. Hence it is crowded by such expressions as these — “a talisman,” “a priceless boon,” “a gem,” “a golden chain,” “an inexhaustible mine,” “a boundless ocean,” “a radiant star,” “a glorious sun,” and “a thing of light.” So, too, we speak of an “atmosphere of love,” and of breezes that come laden with its messages, until we make it an all-pervading thing, — God-commissioned in its blessed work, — and heavenly in the spirit of its ministrations. It melts the hardest, and subdues the proudest; it transforms the lion-like nature of man into one of lamb-like meekness, and makes wrath flee and anger quail. O Love!

“Thou word that sums all bliss,
Gives and receives all bliss, fullest when most
Thou givest! spring-head of all felicity,
Deepest when most is drawn! emblem of God!
O'erflowing most when greatest numbers drink.”

“The sparkling cream of all Time's blessedness.”

But, notwithstanding everything that is gentle and lovely is born of love, it still is the parent of the keenest sorrow. Our heaviest woes are cradled in her arms. These heart-wounds that never heal — from whence the life-drops ooze out day by day until the fatal work is done — are inflicted by her. These things that send so many mourning down to the grave find their cause in the exquisite sensitiveness of loving natures.

Could a voice come from many a grave, it might tell how Love crushed out the young life that was in them. Shall we, then, talk of the rich endowment of Nature? Yes! if we can have immortality; for then we have reason to believe there will be no more such contrarieties; the vast capacity will be filled and satisfied with the perfect.

These seeming contradictions, this close conjunction of sorrow and pleasure, these thorns which infest the roses, frosts which nip the bud, blight which settles so hopelessly upon fair prospects, and the secret process which undermines the structure we had so confidently thought secure, — these things are not what we should have supposed God would have delighted in, had he placed us here to accomplish the whole of our mission, and make body and soul spend themselves together; for this is not the way he acts with any of his creatures whose birth and burial Nature ministers unto.

These things speak a disciplinary state, and betoken an ultimate — *something*.

But to observe still further the dignity and grandeur of the human mind, and the wealth of the human heart, we have only to regard things less abstractly, and become interested in the living exhibition of these delightful principles of moral action, that happily are not without the circle of our own vision.

See the devoted mother as she bends over her unconscious charge, and notice how the ardor of maternal feeling, and the strength of maternal affection, beam from her eyes, and show themselves in every look and tone.

The varying acts and scenes of after life bring no diminution of care and affection, but daily and nightly the flame burns undimmed upon the altar of her heart; and, having attended her child to the confines of time, he passes from sight, while she turns in anguish of spirit to treasure his memory, and console herself with the hope that there is a spirit-land which will restore to her the loved when she, too, shall cease to tread the earth.

Strong, too, is filial affection. The loving child lives for its parents. To please, at whatever sacrifice, is counted the highest joy. The sports of childhood and the pleasures of later youth are enjoyed in proportion as they are shared by these loved counsellors, and it is his delight, as they go down the vale of life, tenderly to smooth the rugged way, and make it pleasant. This is one of the beautiful sights of earth, and another is that painted by the hand of fraternal love. What delicate touches, what beautiful shading, are here manifest! what beautiful coloring is given to this part of life's picture! And behold, a little apart, another group still — fast friends, full of confidence and sympathy, their souls awake to the same harmonies, and inspired with the same love.

Every one yearns for a sympathizing spirit to beat in unison with its own. The heart is made for sympathy — it demands it; the chords of the soul are so strung that they vibrate to its touch, making low, thrilling music to be heard within. The panacea for many an ill is found in sympathy, as those will testify whom it has met in grief and left in joy.

Friendship, too, is so divine a thing that poets have never tired in singing its praises in flowing numbers. They have wreathed its form with their never-fading garlands, and challenged the world to produce anything of equal loveliness; but its praises are not confined to any one class, to any rank or condition. It is seen in every walk of life, and it is only a pitiable few who know not what it is to be blessed with at least one faithful friend. Even the annals of the Pagan world furnish illustrious examples of this and other moral virtues. Who but knows of Damon and Pythias, — “the incomparable pair,” — who were bound so closely in the bonds of friendship that the welfare and honor of each were dearer to the other than life? of Regulus, who chose to become the victim of fearful suffering, and even of death itself, rather than to give his compatriots occasion to call his fidelity in question? of him who was called “*The Just*,” and around whom every virtue was made to cluster with rare grace and beauty?

Generosity and benevolence come also, not with arrogant mien, but with modest story of deeds that make the world richer.

A few years ago, a neighborhood in the south of France was visited with wasting disease. Frightened at the ravages it made, many of the inhabitants fled, leaving the sick to want for necessary care. A young lady at a distance, hearing of this sad state of things, left her own peaceful and healthy district, and, regardless of self, went among the sufferers, and day and night labored with unwearying assiduity to promote the comfort of the sick and sorrowing. Kind-hearted benevolence was the sole prompter of the self-sacrificing deed; for she sought no reward, save the blessed consciousness of doing good, nor was there prospect of any other. She obtained what she least sought — a name and a place amid the bright galaxy of earth's honored ones.

A poor girl in England once became interested in the miserable class of beings confined in prisons, and longed to do something for their elevation. By unremitting application she obtained admittance to forbidding dungeons, and gathering together the outcast flock, she taught them the nature of the blessed principles that ought to actuate human life, and won by the attractions of virtue as exhibited in her life and teachings, they looked up from their degradation, and began to think what it is to be a *moral being*. Moral influences were then started that are felt unto this day, both in that country and this, and will continue to be felt to all time. What in our own day makes the name of Florence Nightingale revered and honored wherever it is heard? It is the moral power of her life, the beneficent character of her actions, that have given such transcendent lustre to her fame. It is her moral heroism that has gained such triumph, and written her name, as with the "point of a diamond," upon the imperishable tablets of human hearts. What a model of philanthropy was Howard! What sublimity of character appears as he travels again and again through widely separated provinces, intent on his mission

of mercy — the elevation and amelioration of the children of misery wherever found, —

“Inemulous of fame or wealth,
Profuse of toil and prodigal of health!”

It is true we find the noblest forms of virtue under the auspicious reign of Christianity. Paul was a notable example. The holy inspiration of his soul moved him to the patient suffering of almost every form of persecution, if so be he might promote the benefit of mankind, and secure that degree of moral and spiritual cultivation, which, in his estimation, was secondary to nothing. To him moral excellence was superior to everything else. The same spirit animates a noble band at the present day. Cherished hopes and fond friends are relinquished, native country, with its ten thousand associations, abandoned for scenes of hardship and danger — for companions not only uncongenial, but even savage in their nature.

Lyman and Munson sacrificed their lives in this work. Williams, the youthful missionary, fell a martyr to the cause in the wilds of Patagonia; and so it might be said of many “of whom the world was not worthy.”

“Such characters afford powerful demonstrations of the sublimity of virtue, of the activity of the human mind, and of its capacity for contributing to the happiness of fellow-intelligences to an unlimited extent.” Can we imagine these powers — this capacity — to be forever extinguished by the stroke of death? These desires for the elevation of mankind are meaningless, these efforts valueless, if there be no other life.

Of what account is moral training, if the moral energies are to be forever swept away by the hand of the Destroying Angel? or of what avail to build up the moral edifice, if it must fall irrecoverably in the day of the body's dissolution?

The same reasons exist for the perpetuation of the moral as of the intellectual faculties.

So limited is the sphere of action in this world, that free scope cannot be given to their action; besides “the period

within which the most energetic powers can be exerted is extremely limited. It is not before man has arrived near the meridian of life that his moral powers begin to be fully expanded; and it frequently happens, in the case of ardent, benevolent characters, that, at the moment when their philanthropic schemes are matured, and they have just commenced their career of beneficence, death interposes, and puts a period to all their labors and designs.

"In the present state of the world, too, numerous physical obstructions interpose to prevent the exertion of the moral powers, even in the most ardent philanthropic minds. The want of wealth and influence; the diseases of an enfeebled corporeal frame; the impediments thrown in the way by malice and envy, and the political arrangements of states; the difficulty of penetrating into every region of the globe where human beings reside, and many other obstructions, — prevent the full exercise of that moral energy which resides in benevolent and heroic minds, and confine its operations within a narrow span. But can we ever suppose, in consistency with divine wisdom and benevolence, that God has implanted in the human constitution benevolent active powers which are never to be fully expanded, and that those godlike characters that have occasionally appeared on the theatre of our world are never to reappear on the field of action, to expatiate, in the full exercise of their moral powers, in the ample career of immortality? To admit such a supposition would be in effect to call in question his wisdom and intelligence. It is the part of wisdom to proportionate means to ends, and to adapt the faculties of any being to the scene in which it is to operate. But here we behold a system of powers which can never be brought into full operation in the present state; and therefore, if death is to put a final termination to the activity of man, the mighty powers and energies with which he is endowed have been bestowed in vain, and we are led to conceive of the Divine Being as deficient in wisdom and intelligence in his government of the intellectual beings he has formed."

But, as we look over the works of God's creation, we continually stop to admire the beauty of that system which indicates universal benevolence. It is not necessary to attempt any illustration of this. It requires but little discrimination to see it, for it is made so plain that "those who run may read," and those who read cannot fail to understand. We, then, naturally ascribe benevolence to the Being who controls the natural world; and is he not as truly King of the moral realm, and therefore regardful of his moral subjects?

The current of this world's affairs, the whole of human life, with its varied experiences, lead us irresistibly to the conclusion that they are directed and superintended with a view to moral retribution. Yet man reaches the last stage of his earthly career feeling that he has not wholly realized it. Cometh it not, then, in an after life? What of those characters distinguished for high attainments in virtue and goodness, who labored incessantly, with such disinterestedness of purpose, for the good of others? Was it that they might be the more splendid wrecks? Rather, was there not something within them which assured their souls that when the *Great Teacher* should dismiss them from their preparatory school, he would call them to a higher sphere, — a broader and nobler field of action, — where the moral powers would find the development they could not find anywhere, or under any circumstances, on earth?

Ah! there is reason to conclude that these characters, subject to such varied discipline in the terrestrial state, will attain their utmost desire in the celestial — that state where the imperfect will become perfect, and the incomplete put on a form of completion. There are, at least, whispers in Nature that tell us that these buds of virtue, which find such tardy growth, and scarce open here in this ungenial clime, will yet blossom and expand in a more genial soil, and under an atmosphere of purer elements.

Yes! these moral powers bespeak another life. We would fain believe these moral energies shall find free scope, not for

a little season, but for a limitless one, and that those spirits of whom we have spoken, who were influenced by a burning zeal for truth and right on earth, are now advancing in moral beauty and perfection, in unfettered and tireless action; for, says Fordyce, "we may conclude, from analogy, that man is destined for an after-part, and is to be produced upon a more august and solemn stage, where his sublimer powers shall have proportioned action, and his nature attain its completion."

CHAPTER V.

FOREBODINGS OF RETRIBUTION.

Sphere of Conscience. — Belshazzar. — Testimony from Profane History. — Webster, the Murderer. — Moral Convictions answering to Moral Laws. — Society without Virtue. — Force of Moral Obligation. — Tendency toward Perfection. — Its Indications. ✓

“Conscience, in some awful, silent hour,
 When captivating lusts have lost their power,
 Starts from the down, on which she lately slept,
 And tells of laws despised, at least not kept;
 Shows, with a pointing finger, but no noise,
 A pale procession of past, sinful joys;
 All witnesses of blessings foully scorned,
 And life abused, and, not to be suborned;
 Mark these, she says; these, summoned from afar,
 Begin their march to meet thee at the bar;
 There find a Judge inexorably just;
 And perish there, as all presumption must.” — *Cowper*.

If the restless desires and aspirations of the mind, its boundless capacity, and the existence and exercise of the moral powers, indicate a *coming life*, so do the forebodings and apprehensions of the natural heart shadow forth the same truth. Intellect, in its sphere, points the soul to truth, and bids it observe the beauty of its form and the excellence of its teachings, while conscience, the moral agent, as steadily fixes the attention upon duty and the eternal laws of right and wrong.

Never does man find himself arraigned before the tribunal of his own conscience to answer to the ten thousand charges it brings against him, without it suggesting the *possibility*, at least, of another court, — another Judge, — where the claims of justice will be faithfully presented, carefully weighed, and duly

settled. The *Great Lawgiver* — the *Eternal Judge* — hath written laws and principles on the statute-book of mind, and given a moral sense of the fitness of these to the interests of practical life, coupling with it a feeling of obligation, indifference to which insures uneasiness and misery, and a "certain fearful looking for of judgment," to be pronounced against those who habitually and wilfully come short of this acknowledged rightful standard. We are subjects of a moral government, and, as such, are bound to observe the *conditions* of subjects. So inwoven is this moral sense into the very constitution of our being, we cannot be reckless of these conditions without feeling in our own souls a secret condemnation or dread of fearful visitation in some way or other.

The peremptory voice of *right* is always sounding in the ear, *Obey, or suffer*; and when this admonition is unheeded — positively disregarded — the shrinking spirit cowers before even the harmless objects that surround it. Fear hovers around like a spectre, and imagination discovers the sound of the chariot wheels of vengeance, though it be not yet sent on its way. It matters not if the deed or action be concealed from the eye of man, and circumstances still favor its concealment; there is yet a trembling dread and apprehension of coming evil that fills the soul with terror. Such a one sees his path hedged up by eager pursuers for the guilty; accusing voices fill the air, and, turn which way he will, there is but one sound that greets him — *The guilty must be punished*. He is haunted by day, and the shadows of night only increase his anguish, for *Reflection* is daughter of the night, and she insists that the record of deeds shall be well reviewed. He seeks in vain to elude the gaze and avoid the presence of this faithful monitress; but wherever he goes, though it be to a remote and solitary cell, he finds himself doomed to the companionship of this reprover. He would fain remove himself from the sound of reproaches; but, unable to do it, despair settles upon him, and he falls a prey to the pangs of remorse.

The pages of history, both ancient and modern, afford abundant examples of this kind ; and what shall we say of unwritten history — the woes and wailings which have never been recorded save by the Angel whom the *Almighty Historian* hath commissioned to prepare the volume to be opened at the last?

Is it not enough to suggest the idea of retribution? What but this agitated the mind of the impious monarch, to whom appeared the "hand writing on the wall," making his knees to smite together in the wild intensity of fear? What though he had desecrated the holy temple and appropriated the sacred things to an unhallowed purpose ; filling the golden cups with the sparkling draught for his own profane lips, and those of his friends ; enhancing the sumptuousness of the convivial board by the splendid array of these costly vessels? Why should such sudden terror change his countenance and trouble his heart? Was it the fear of man? A "thousand of his lords" were about him, pledged to guard the life and support the honor of their king. Surely it could not be this ; neither was it that he had calmly thought of his course, until it had assumed its true aspect in his eyes, for reflection had found no opportunity to remind him of the full extent of his crime.

He was revelling amid the luxuries of a splendid entertainment ; art and wealth combined to intoxicate, and pleasure to drown the voice of expostulation. Was it that he saw in the fearful words before him his real doom, and his proud spirit could not brook the sentence? "*Mene*:" must this be so — my reign at an end — my kingdom finished? "*Tekel*:" must the world know it, my princes, my nobles, and my subjects, and I be taunted with the story of my inglorious fall, forever? "*Peres*:" my glory is departed — a gift to mine enemies ; and how can I bear the humiliating change? Were these the thoughts that rushed through the mind of the king, as he looked upon the mysterious characters traced upon the wall? No! he knew nothing at all of their awful import. Those

words fraught with such terrible meaning were as yet a sealed mystery to him : he knew it not ; but deep in his soul was the consciousness of wrong-doing — that he had been guilty of most sacrilegious impiety ; and it was this that made him apprehensive of evil, and awoke his forebodings of swift and merited retribution ; that made him turn from the scene, pale with affright, with no other thought but that “ *the judgments of heaven are coming, and how can I be shielded?* ”

In the annals of profane history no name stands higher on the lists of impiety and crime than Antiochus Epiphanes. Thousands of people fell victims simply to his inhuman thirst for blood ; nor was he satisfied with a death of ordinary suffering. Every species of cruelty that his wicked ingenuity could devise was most unmercifully perpetrated upon innocent multitudes. Destruction was in his path. Towns and cities were plundered, burned, and swept from existence. If he saved a remnant of people, they were to observe his religion and gods, or the most severe penalties awaited them. He dedicated the temple at Jerusalem to Jupiter Olympus, and set up his own statue upon the altar from whence had gone up the incense of holy offerings, and those who refused to pay homage to his self-constituted god he subjected to the most cruel tortures, nor ceased until death terminated their woes, unless he could gain a compliance with his infernal wishes. It is too painful to recall his repeated crimes. They reached their culmination in the death of the seven brothers, — the Maccabees, — who, with their mother, were barbarously put to death simply for their refusal to eat the flesh of swine, which their law forbade. He was arrested in the midst of his cursed work by a disease of terrific character. His bodily sufferings were intense, but they were not to be compared with the agony of that spirit that looked forth from the decaying and falling tenement, shrieking for deliverance from those reproachful sounds that filled his ears. In his delirium a thousand forms stood before him, charging him with crimes ; and in this wretched, fearing, miserable state, he died.

Thus we might produce a long list. We might speak of Charles IX. of France, whose name is associated with all the terrors of the Bartholomew massacre; of William the Conqueror, whose closing life was rendered so intolerable by the thought that he was going to meet the sentence the *evils of sixty-four years* demanded; of Richard III., whose insatiable ambition sent his royal nephews to their grave, and how the act was followed by a life-long fear of vengeance; of Nero, of Domitian, and a host of others, whose notorious acts were always followed by these wretched fears of what should happen to them in consequence.

But we spare these painful recitals. We forbear further mention of these ancient dead. We cannot know the reality of their fate. We have to do with the power and office-work of conscience, and are to rest with these intimations until a more perfect knowledge shall bring a clearer light and greater certainty.

We need go no farther than the pages of our weekly journals to find facts illustrative of this point, and possibly not out of the circle of our own observation; yea, our own consciences tell us, in unmistakable language, of a time of judgment. The record is yet comparatively fresh in the history of Massachusetts, of that gifted man who left the high walks of literary and social life for a home in the prison-cell, and a death on the gibbet. Ere suspicion rested upon him, before men had even dreamed that the man of genius had stooped so low, his soul was disquieted with harassing fears, and imagination became a demon of anxiety to him. His nightly rest was disturbed by visions of those who branded him as a murderer, and through all the hours of the day an impending cloud seemed ready to break upon his head. The innocent tread of officers and students past his room was as the footsteps of so many angry pursuers for their victim. Every attempt to gain admittance through his barred door was as if the bolts of justice had been loosened from their place, that they might be hurled against

him. He kindled the fire of the chemist, that every trace of his guilt might be consumed; but he built a fire in his soul that was hotter and stronger than this. He brought scientific mixtures to his aid, that no fatal drop — no significant stain — should silently but surely proclaim the foul deed.

His scrupulous care did not prevent this; but, supposing it had been successful, could mixture of human preparation ever have erased it from his memory and conscience? Never was the anguish of his mind — the upbraiding of his conscience — keener and louder than while it was unknown to the world; when it rankled, a secret in his own breast. And why? Ah! there was a *solemn why* in his own soul: he found it in the gaze of the Omniscient — the dread of his ire.

But these fearful apprehensions are not incident merely to giants in wickedness — to those who provoke the justice of Heaven by daring deeds of impiety and sin. How many amiable ones, so called, who run the giddy round of fashionable pleasure, gay and smiling, apparently light-hearted and joyous, who, if they should lay aside the veil that covers their hearts, would show them ill at ease, and all for the fear of a *something to come!* The gayest worldling has confessed to many a bitter tear for the same reason. Scores, in many a pleasure-seeking circle, would tell, if they divulged the truth, how their most exquisite enjoyments were embittered by this same thought.

A celebrated actress once gathered about her a troop of admirers, exciting the jealousy of some, the envy of more, because of her peerless charms, and great success wherever she went. That favored being, as she was called, might have been seen at night, in her own room, apart from the glitter of parade, the sound of flattery, and the worshipping crowd, not congratulating herself upon the brilliancy of her career, the brightness of her fame, and extent of her popularity, but weeping, sorrowing, and trembling, under the influence of remorse, which pointed to a day of reckoning, when she would desire more

than the adulation of a crowd to insure satisfaction. This is the history of many, as midnight revelations would abundantly testify ; but night treasures the secrets intrusted to her keeping, and we know only of those who, finding such confidence insufficient, come into the light, and proclaim their need of wider sympathy and more substantial good. The devotees of pleasure and fashion, those who engage with the most ardor in all they have to offer, are yet conscious that they possess a higher nature which it is important they should regard ; and would this consciousness exist were it a "baseless fabric of a vision," an airy nothing ? Were there no life beyond this, we might pursue the whole round of sensual delights, and spend all our energies in mere physical gratification, with no compunctions of conscience ; indeed, where would be the necessity for the workings of this agent at all ?

We should find ourselves in possession of this most sensitive faculty only that our souls might be tortured and our spirits lacerated to no purpose ; and how could we reconcile this with what reason teaches us of the character of a benevolent God ? In such a case we might reap all of earth we chose, until, weary and worn out with the labor, we should lie down in the dust, as now ; but it would matter no more to us than to the senseless grains about us what the history of the past had been, or what the character of our actions. As it is, we cannot plunge into scenes of folly and dissipation — we cannot trifle away our time in frivolous amusement — without the warning sounding in our ears, "Know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment ;" and this was a saying uttered before Christ had opened the doors of immortality, and set the doctrine above a reasonable doubt.

In how many instances have the closing hours of life been filled with deep and unavailing regret because the past had been so little improved — yielded so little that was truly worthy ; for man, as we have said, instinctively and reverently acknowledges the superiority of moral excellence, especially if he sees

its living exemplification. Even the most ignorant and superstitious in all time have had an idea that well-doing merits and will receive commendation, while its opposite is blameworthy, and will receive its due also. This but confirms what was said at the commencement of this chapter — that the moral perceptions implanted in the human constitution may be considered as having the force of moral laws, proceeding from the Author of all law; that the difference between right and wrong in action is eternal and unchangeable, and every moral agent is endowed with a faculty that enables him to see, feel, and appreciate it.

Now, we say these things indicate immortality; that these moral powers seem to contain the elements of everlasting life; that they will find their fullest display in a different theatre than this. They are the most vigorous in the hour of death; but if man were mortal he could have nothing to fear, not even the vengeance of the Almighty. Infidels, standing at a fancied distance from death, have declaimed confidently of annihilation, and scorned the idea of moral accountability; but as they have neared the boundary of time they have experienced a keenness of moral perception that has awakened them to an instinctive dread of the future, and made them the unwitting if not willing confessors of this manifest truth.

Said one of this class, "I have often wished for insanity — for anything to quell memory, the never-dying worm that feeds on my heart."

"So writhes the mind remorse hath riven."

But is this mental disquietude consistent with the professed belief of infidels? Are these terrors of conscience — these forebodings of the future — at all compatible with their doctrine? It is a contradiction for such to speak of a "never-dying worm." Their whole theory is opposed to all such considerations.

When the candle has burned out, we cannot relight it; and thus they speculate concerning life. If they admit the particles of their own mysterious structure to be indestructible,

they deny that any part of their being retains consciousness ; and of what consequence can it be to them what becomes of these inanimate particles, — whether they are in darkness of greater or less intensity, or are scattered in realms of corresponding light ? To waste fear upon this account would be the height of folly.

Let infidelity talk as it may, there is a wide difference between theory and practice in the lives of its followers. They profess to have an admirable superstructure upon a permanent basis ; but every tempest excites their alarm, every change in the heavens makes them tremble.

They denounce faith in future existence as fanaticism, and yet are strangely solicitous in a certain hour to know if faith will really be lost in sight a little later ; if there be, after all, an emerging into another state, a rising into a new life ; what shall be characteristic of it, and what the manner of transformation.

Were we to imagine a state of things in harmony with the sceptic's professed belief, society would at once be presented to us as composed of the wildest, rudest, and most ungovernable elements possible. Were there really no hope of a future life — no fear of moral retribution — there would be no restraint to the indulgence of the vilest passions. Man is more prone to vice than to virtue. He requires strong inducements to the cultivation and practice of the latter. 'Remove the influence of fear and hope, as connected with future existence, from him entirely, and you sweep away a mighty barrier, if not every bar in the ways of sin and folly, leaving nothing to oppose their resistless march. There would be no check to selfishness. It would be the personal aim of all to secure the accomplishment of their own schemes, the gratification of their own desires, at whatever hazard.

There would be nothing to lessen "man's inhumanity to man ;" and in their intercourse with each other, justice and prudence would be unmeaning terms. There would be scarcely

room for the play of the benevolent and social affections, and the moral virtues would be an anomaly in the world. Disorder and confusion would reign supreme, and earth present only a scene of anarchy and woe. So fast would everything die out of the social and moral nature under such influences as these, that we do not think it so strange they talk of annihilation, for, there would be nothing left worth living for.

Then, though the scoffer and the sceptic continue in their course, it shall only confirm us in the conclusion that there is another life, to which we are tending. We incline to the thought that if "order" be the "first law" of Him who made the world, in its construction it shall not be less observable in the intelligent part of his creation.

We say not there are no moral disorders in the world. Every page of history would contradict such an assertion. The thousand times ten thousand acts in the present drama of life would rise to assert its falsity. Myriad voices from past and present would tell how avarice, injustice, and revenge had held sway among men; how war had desolated the earth; jealousies alienated people from each other, involving individuals and nations in hostile feuds; and superstition and cruelty engendered discord and bitter animosities among multitudes of the human race. The malevolent passions are often triumphant; malice and oppression do their dreadful work, blasting the fairest portions of the moral heritage; and pride and haughtiness put on their defiant looks to trouble the meek and timid.

Fraud stalks forth on her extortionate errands, and Dishonesty slyly carries out her illegal plans. Anger, hate, and treachery have all added their portion to the fearful mixture, seriously disturbing the happiness and general welfare of mankind. Both the sensitive and intellectual enjoyments of men have been sadly marred by the prevalence and indulgence of these unholy passions.

Every period of the world's history bears too plainly the marks of this unhappy confusion; and some, looking at these

things alone, have settled down upon the idea of inevitable moral bankruptcy. But does evil preponderate? Does vice strengthen her bands, and ride over virtue? "Does the law of morality alone answer no purpose in the universe which God has made?"

"The manifold arrangements and beautiful contrivances, with which the purely material universe abounds, all subserve important ends, and in these ends we read the purposes of their Contriver. Each has its part to play in upholding the fabric of that universe of which it is a portion, and we know it was designed to fill that part;" and shall not the "law of right, with the consciousness of it which animates every human breast," also perform the part for which it was designed, in its sphere?

It is true we are compelled to admit the existence of a long catalogue of moral evils; but there is a broad view to be taken of these things, and the Christian philosopher, while he deeply deplores their spread, sees arise from these very things the germ of a new and immortal existence. The God who so delights in harmony in the material world will ultimately produce the same in the moral world. Perfection is the law of conscience—the standard the divine Lawgiver has erected; and surely there will be some theatre for the part to be enacted. As it is, this law is certainly a restraining and regulating force in society; it speaks a divine government, to which man is, and ever must be, eternally subject.

Moral woes are abroad, we know, but it is a sense of moral obligation that keeps society from being a perfect chaos, so that we may discover in all, if we will, "not merely the filaments of order, but a closely-woven web covered with a uniform and glorious pattern." Says a modern writer, to those unskilled in "finding the key which converts an apparent maze into an harmonious and well-proportioned plan, there are not only many anomalies, but seeming lawlessness and confusion" in many of these things: "the moral world, the history of the individual, of nations, and of the race, seems to present a mere

jumble of events, the blind goddess of fortune distributing the parts, and allotting at random to each performer the measure of good and evil in this life which he is fated to receive. But study this maze by the aid of the eternal principles of right and wrong, which are enthroned in every heart; strive to go behind the external trappings of prosperity and adversity, to count the hours of real, not merely seeming, enjoyment, or, in other words, to explore the private history of every man, as well as the story of his outer and public life, and the confusion will clear away almost as fully as in the case of the physical universe. I say '*almost* as fully;' for it cannot be denied that the problem is more complicated in its very nature; the material universe, in all its large features, presents to us exclusively the picture of God's doings; the moral world, so far as it is visible to our eyes, shows the union of man's action with that of his Maker. God still governs, and that absolutely; but through moral, not mechanical means. Human free-will is allowed a large theatre on which to develop itself, and the results are necessarily more complex and intricate than when divine agency alone is exerted. Still the government prevails, order reigns, eternal laws are prescribed and enforced, and the purposes of the Almighty are carried out. In the distribution of bodily and mental health and disease; in the conditions of what is called success in life; in the secret contentment and joy which wait on the unostentatious fulfilment of ordinary duties, and in the glow and exaltation of feeling which accompany and reward a great apparent sacrifice for the right; in the institutions of society, and the sympathies of mankind, which aim directly to encourage the good and to punish the evil doer, — in these and many other circumstances I see all the grand features of a comprehensive plan, wisely contrived and efficiently carried out, to win men to the practice of virtue, and to punish every violation of the moral law. If, in a few cases, I behold apparent exceptions to the rule, or am not able to trace the workings of the plan, I do but follow the ordinary principles of

scientific method and inductive logic in maintaining, with full, assured belief, that a more complete knowledge of the circumstances would show that the scheme operates even here, the seeming anomalies being, in truth, its most beautiful exemplifications. If a planet on the outer verge of our system shows perturbations, for which, according to our present knowledge of that system, the law of gravity will not account, I do not therefore conclude that the law is suspended in this single case, but rather wait with firm trust for the progress of discovery to point out some still exterior orb, as yet invisible to mortal eyes, the action of which will explain the seeming disturbance, and make the law appear as universal as it is wise."

We must conclude, notwithstanding seeming disorder and confusion, that order exists in all God's ways and plans, and that man, his noblest work, will be perfected somewhere — if not in this, in some other state. With such a thought the discipline of life assumes meaning; without it, and without any such prospect, we sink to the level of mere animal existence; yea, even lower, for that in its sphere is perfect, accomplishing a perfect design, while with man it is the reverse.

Admitting this conclusion, we look to the time when the moral evils of the world will be rectified; when the intelligent universe will be restored to harmony and happiness, and all the confusion necessarily incident to this disciplinary state will be resolved into harmonious proportion and beautiful design; when all that appears dark to the present understanding will be contemplated as part of one grand system that is to run parallel with the ages of eternity, and when all the attributes of the divine character shadowed forth in his works shall be fully displayed.

The evidence that comes from the depths of our moral nature proclaims, at least, the probability of this; for this keenness of perception, this foreboding of retribution, have each a tongue to tell that they have undying elements, upon which death and the grave have no power. Were this not so, we might

roam the earth, and need no more than mere animal instinct to meet every emergency, and satisfy every want; but here we have an innate sense of right, as a prompter and guide to action — so strong as to have the force of law; and things would be inexplicable and irreconcilable unless we suppose man is in a state of probation, destined to another scene of existence — to be an actor under another and more perfect administration than this.

We may, indeed, conceive of a state of society where virtue would be wooed, loved, and wedded for its own sake; but if we suppose this, we must conceive also a different race of beings from that which now inhabits the earth, for all our present knowledge would be inapplicable, the basis whereon we stand would be swept away, and we should have nothing left but an indefinable ideal, or necessity for a new creation, with very little reason to hope for the interposition of the Divine Artificer to aid in fashioning models after our own miserable patterns.

If things are not just as we, in our short-sightedness, would have them, how much better to take them as they are, than to risk the "chaos and dire confusion" which we should inevitably bring on ourselves by a fancied change! Thus they must be taken — rather they must remain thus, for the counsels of eternal truth shall stand, and the mouldings of God's house shall be everlastingly fixed, whatever change the haughtiness of man may suggest.

Whatever may be the opinions and attempts of the latter, whatever paths he would open for the present and mark out for the future, we would turn from them all to the sure adumbrations of truth and immortality which the Divine Author has traced for us in the great volume of Nature; and this great book "has been the music of gentle and pious minds in all ages: it is the tendency of all human nature to read in it a figurative sense, and to find therein correspondences and symbols of the spiritual world."

CHAPTER VI.

INEQUALITIES OF THE PRESENT LIFE.

Teachings of Nature. — *Character of God.* — *Virtue and Vice unrewarded here.* — *Waldensian Persecution.* — *Scenes in the Reign of Louis Fourteenth.* — *Days of Martyrdom.* — *Mysterious Providences.* — *Life apparently a Season of Discipline.*

“ This life is all checkered with pleasures and woes,
That chase one another like waves of the deep,
Each brightly or darkly, as onward it flows,
Reflecting our eyes, as they sparkle or weep.” — *Moore.*

A VERY few in this world, by the adjustment of self-imposed scales upon their organs of vision, have affirmed that they have never seen the evidence of a God in what others have been wont to call a *divine transcript*, radiant with meaning, and full of plain fact to this very end. They have looked into the great book of Nature, where every page speaks of its Divine Author, and their sight has been so dim, that they have failed to see, or, seeing, refused to receive, the evidence of their senses, and so gone on wilfully blind to the grandest conceivable expressions of beauty and truth that could come before the gaze of man on earth.

It is only a few, however, that are able to resist the force of the mighty arguments that meet them on every hand; only a few that can look at the complicated structure of the human system, observing the nice adjustment, the harmony and adaptation of every part, without acknowledging a power and skill, of wondrous origin, attributable to no known source, and therefore above and beyond all they know in any being like themselves.

Such design and such contrivance must belong to some superior being; and when is superadded the weight of evidence from the external world, the conviction is overwhelming, and the majority of mankind cry out, "There is a God." Mind would trace out his character; and, as in human life the characteristics of a man are seen in the efforts of his genius, his method of action, so also do we take these divine exhibitions as a transcript of the character of this Being. Reason then asserts, that He who caused this grand display—who wrought and fashioned so glorious a scheme, so perfect a model—should have it under his own immediate control, and subject to his pleasure and disposal.

Any plan of action He might see fit to adopt would unquestionably be his right, and the principles which move him in the administration of his government such as no one could question until he could establish claims to higher wisdom and deeper design.

The management of the elements of nature, in connection with and adaptation to the wants and welfare of man, indicate the action of infinite benevolence, while other things show that justice is not less a trait of the divine character. That perfect harmony exists in the creative mind is a conclusion very easily attained, for the proofs of this are beautifully apparent; and thus all God's attributes are traced out by the eye of reason; indeed it is all that man can know until some revelation is made; and it is enough to show God's character, and to deduce some just ideas of his government, for laws are types of the disposition of rulers—in no case more than with Him who is the great Prototype of all law.

Although it be comparatively easy to trace out the attributes of God, and the nature of his government, from the consideration of his works, and his dealings with men, it is not so easy to go farther, and decide upon their ultimate destiny.

All that we can know of future existence here is what we might naturally suppose a Being of such attributes, of such

character, would, in all probability, prepare for his subjects. Justice and rectitude, if we may so speak, are qualities of his nature; and we therefore look for the incorporation of these elements into the laws whereby he governs his creatures, and suppose that the joint inscriptions of these upon the tablets of the universe, and of the human heart, speak an importance of no slight moment — that they stand, and will continue to stand, everlasting memorials of everlasting minds.

But we do not find these principles wholly carried out in this life.. Virtue does not always meet its reward, nor vice its punishment, and we are led to think the fullest display is reserved, and instead of the triumph being witnessed by people upon the shores of *time*, it will be seen on *the other side*.

The divine character would be robbed of much of the beauty that reason sees in it, to suppose that this world is the only scene of rewards and punishments; for it would imply a strange partiality, and detract altogether from the regal majesty she had enthroned there. It would be like sweeping away the foundation-stone to a building, leaving the superstructure to totter and fall. In both cases, amazed beholders might weep over the ruins; but, while in one instance order might be easily restored, in the other no possible agency could prevent confusion. No! introduce disorder where we may, the attributes of God and the principles of his government are eternally sure; and yet, as we have said, the equity of his administration is by no means observable if we limit it to time. Hence the inequalities of life must afford an argument for a future state.

Virtue is born of God — He delights in it; and yet how often do we see the poor pilgrim at its shrine conversant with every form of suffering, bending beneath the burden of his woes, while every step in his course only seems to add to its weight! and this not for once, but through successive years, is his constant portion.

Trustful and patient, he bears his accumulated ills, always

hoping for light to illumine the darkness, until the last drop of oil is spent in the lamp of life, and he expires ; but of such we are wont to say, He shall have his reward.

God will not suffer the child of his love to be eternally trampled under foot. And we conclude that virtue, like truth, if "crushed to earth shall rise again," — lifted by a mighty hand, that will tenderly bind each bleeding wound when the feverish system will allow its perfect close.

In multitudes of instances, virtue has gone through life unrewarded, while vice and wrong have revelled in prosperity, and known every species of luxury. A case comes to mind — only one of a numberless list.

In a certain city, and on its principal street, may be seen a large building, the front of which shows the taste, wealth, and industry of its owner. The various wares upon exhibition show an extensive interest in trade ; nor is it a false intimation. Success has crowned all his endeavors. And now ships from the seas, and engines on land, pour their treasures into his overflowing coffers. No clouds appear in his sky ; on the contrary, only the undimmed brightness of prosperity ; and all this while he is actuated by a selfish devotion, that makes him unmindful of God's claims, and indifferent to the obligations of piety and virtue. Even the Sabbath is secretly unwelcome, because of the transient interruption of his business engagements ; and the holy convocation is turned, in effect, to a scene of merchandise. Still the song of the dawning week is success, and the years are ushered in by new columns for his book of gain, and new calls to strengthen and enlarge the bands which encircle his spreading treasures. An obscure garret in this building is rented to a poor, lone woman, who has seen, one by one, the friends of her youth desert her, and like a solitary tree the tempest has spared, living on till the "Lord of the vineyard" shall order its prostration for his own purposes. She remains to fill out the remnant of her days. Her physical system has long since ceased to feel the inspiration of healthful

feeling, and her body is oftentimes weary and wasting, because the demands of want are unheeded. While the cheerful gas and the glowing anthracite are lessening the cold and darkness below, a simple taper gleams upon her fireless hearth, around which she gathers, thanking God for this. While the thoughtless man daily sits at his sumptuous board, the lone woman has often nothing to place upon her humble table, and *never* unless charity has provided the morsel. The four walls of her narrow apartment witness the daily exercises of a hearty, God-fearing, God-trusting spirit. She strives, amid every privation, to retain the integrity of life untarnished, while the other minds not, cares not, though frequent spots sully the garments about him.

This is no fancy sketch. Some may say it is an extreme case; but who does not know that life is full of instances like this? showing an unequal distribution of reward, and consequently intimating that a perfect God will vindicate his ways, and show complete justice in another life, if it is not shown in this.

There are thousands of humble, virtuous people who tread the vale of poverty all their lives long, but are actuated by the noblest motives, and controlled by the purest principles, that can govern intelligent men. Their secret histories, if written, would show conflicts with, and victories over, contending passions, that are braver and nobler conquests than the taking of cities. Their ambition is to master the foes that appear in battle array on the moral field; their coveted distinction, to meet the approval of the sovereign of this realm—Conscience; and they wreath no laurels about their brows but such as are won by high and holy endeavor in the arena of truth and right.

In social and friendly intercourse, they are guided by the strictest rules of justice and benevolence, and all their actions show an unselfish regard for others; and yet these often have less of ease, comfort, pleasure, and real good, if we look at things merely in a temporal light, than the throng of tyrannical,

selfish, thoughtless class of men, who have no relish for the moral virtues, and live in the constant neglect and abuse of them. These may be surrounded by favorites, by the splendor and luxury of a palace, by all that wealth and station can give, and live only to devise new schemes of iniquity, and execute their diabolical plans in perfect security from human punishment. They may invade communities, and carry desolation to a thousand peaceful circles; may plunder provinces, and waste the heritage of a peaceable people, and, what is worse, murder, unmindful of the cries of the innocent and helpless; and, instead of being followed by the avenging sword of Justice, their "favor is courted by attendants; their praises are chanted by orators and poets; the story of their exploits is engraved in brass and marble; and historians stand ready to transmit their fame to future generations."

Tyrants have lived in every age of the world, and have not only held forth their sceptres, but have wantonly made men succumb to their authority. The most unjust and cruel treatment has been received at their hands, and dark pages in history show their crimes, — crimes of the most aggravated guilt and deepest dye; of such revolting character, we forbear even to mention them, — and yet justice slumbered, and the exulting perpetrators revelled in the scene.

What thrilling cries went up from the quiet valleys of Piedmont from suffering thousands! What shrieks from the sequestered homes of the pious Waldenses! In the cool recesses of the Alps — in these mountain fastnesses of Nature — they lived happy and blessed in their retirement, apart from the strife and contention which agitated the world in general, and distinguished for their industry, piety, and the cultivation of every moral virtue which is always associated with religion in the devout soul.

The incessant, patient labor of more than two centuries wrought a wonderful change, transforming the barren hill-sides into fruitful gardens, and making the bleakest places inviting

by the erection of cottages which held happy families — happy because over their rock-sheltered homes brooded pious content. Mutual love and affection were the law of this mountain people. No disputes disturbed their harmony, for brotherly love precluded all possibility of discord. They had no regular priests, no pretended ritual, nor boasted any superior code; but there, in their secluded haunts, they built an altar to the living God, and, in the "magnificent temple" formed by the heavenly Architect, they paid fitting homage, acceptable to the Infinite. Nobler worship was never known than was to be seen in these mountain assemblies. They had a little world of their own on a model plan. The sun, perhaps, spared but a few of his straggling rays for the remote glen; but nevertheless, the grateful inhabitants were not strangers to cheerful light, and the streams which trickled down from glacial heights refreshed as perfect an oasis as ever appeared in the moral desert of life. They continued to increase, and villages and hamlets sprang up around them, all subject to the same mild sway, the same pacific government.

Now, with what Nature teaches us of God, of his justice and beneficence, and supposing his government of his creatures to be limited to time, we should naturally expect that such a people would be his special delight; that He would cherish for them peculiar care, always interpose to prevent the hellish designs of wicked men, and give complete deliverance from all their foes. We could draw no other inference with consistency; and yet we see this peaceable and interesting people become the victims of a persecution almost without a parallel for its cruelty and terror.

Terrible edicts went forth from the parliament of Provence, and the messengers of haughty princes, eager to execute their commission, entered the precincts of this harmless people, and commenced a work of destruction that ceased not until the results of toilsome centuries were swept away, and scarce a vestige remained of their thrift and industry. Men, women,

and children, in attempting to flee, were arrested and put to death without mercy, and all that appertained to them destroyed before their eyes.

The year 1540 witnessed the whole of that flourishing district turned into a cheerless and solitary desert. The place once vocal with the songs of a virtuous and happy people became silent as the grave; indeed, it was made as one vast tomb, wherein the pious sons of the mountain found a burial, — not such a burial as they had given, when, after the gentle decadence of years, they had hopefully laid down their own to rest in the quiet dells about them. No! theirs was a premature and cruel death, and their bones were left as a legacy to the soil on which they had lived. Their ungarnished sepulchres are not forgotten, and a voice has been heard issuing therefrom, saying, "The Lord shall avenge his slaughtered saints."

The haughty and malicious priests, through whose influence these atrocious deeds were done, still revelled in the luxury of their palace surroundings, indulged in every form of dissipation and vice, and exulted over their impious and daring crimes. Can this be the *end* — virtue trampled in the dust and vice erect at noonday? The conviction naturally forces itself upon the mind, that a day of retribution must come, when the meaning of such discipline will be apparent, when the cry of injured Justice will be heard, and guilt shall meet its doom. We cannot vindicate the character of the Almighty, in such dispensations as these, in any other way; and we should choose to do this at the expense of everything else, for what is man, or the opinions of men, in contrast?

From the little town of Albi, also, comes a breeze laden with like sounds of those from off Alpine heights. The record of Albigensian wrongs gives a similar story of persecuted innocence, of helpless resistance to forces worked by unholy agents, and of misery and waste that followed in the march of tyrants and their base accomplices.

Louis XIV. made France the theatre for the exhibition of



the very worst passions. He hated virtue, and wherever he saw it lift its unpretending head, he crushed it beneath his iron sword in disdain. His associate, the base Montrevel, was one of kindred spirit. Whenever a song of praise went up to the God of heaven in their hearing, it was silenced, whether it was the devout pæan of a single heart, or the combined expression of a hundred. Five times this number once became the victims of their rage; and while four hundred converts were rejoicing together in the heavenly light they had found, they and their friends were consigned to a bloody and untimely death.

Notwithstanding the barbarous acts of his reign, it is said he continued for thirty years to riot in all the splendors of absolute royalty, seemingly exempt from the visitations of retributive justice, entering into the most solemn treaties only to break them as his fancy pleased, and arrogating to himself the honor and authority which belonged only to the Divine Being; and after all this, instead of meeting the infamy he justly deserved, there were found historians to eulogize him as *Louis the Great*.

The pages both of ancient and modern history are full of examples that illustrate this subject; but we forbear to cite them. We have all heard of the terrible persecutions to which the Christian world has been subject; of the fires of Smithfield; the slow-burning, but destructive fagot so often kindled by Queen Mary; of throngs of martyrs that have suffered at the stake and the rack because of devotion to holy principles, while monarchs in wickedness, who have instigated the fearful work, have kept their thrones and their glory.

Martyrs are counted by millions — those who have esteemed nothing so dear as truth and right, who have heard the authoritative tones of that voice we have called eternal, and chose to obey it, despite the most menacing threats and the most excruciating tortures.

When we look at this period of the world's history, and see

how human life was sacrificed to the caprice of wicked men, to what extent they pushed their nefarious enginery, and how they exulted and triumphed in the result of its workings, we are met by the question, "Are justice and judgment the foundation of God's throne?" and we confess to nothing but a negative reply, if this be the scene of final retribution.

"When we take a survey of the moral world around us," says one, "as it exists in the present day, the same conclusion forces itself upon the mind. When we behold, on the one hand, the virtuous and upright votary of religion struggling with poverty and misery, treated with scorn and contempt, persecuted on account of his integrity and piety, despoiled of his earthly enjoyments, or condemned to an ignominious death; and, on the other, the profligate and oppressor, the insolent despiser of God and religion, passing his days in affluence and luxurious ease, prosecuting with impunity his unhallowed courses, and robbing the widow and the fatherless of their dearest comforts — when we behold hypocrisy successful in all its schemes, and honesty and rectitude overlooked and neglected — the destroyer of our species loaded with wealth and honors, while the benefactors of mankind are pining in obscurity and indigence — knaves and fools exalted to posts of dignity and honor, and men of intelligence and uprightness treated with scorn, and doomed to an inglorious obscurity — criminals of the deepest dye escaping with impunity, and generous actions meeting with a base reward — when we see young men of virtue and intelligence cut off in early life, when they were just beginning to bless mankind with their philanthropic labors, and tyrants and oppressors continuing the pests of society, and prolonging their lives to old age in the midst of their folly and wickedness — when we behold one nation and tribe irradiated with intellectual light, another immersed in thick darkness; one enjoying the blessings of civilization and liberty, another groaning under the lash of despotism — when we contemplate such facts throughout every department

of the moral world, can we suppose, for a moment, that the divine administration is bounded by the visible scene of things, that the real characters of men shall never be brought to light, that vice is to remain in eternal concealment and impunity, and that the noblest virtues are never to receive their just 'recompense of reward'?

"To admit such a conclusion would be, in effect, to deny the wisdom, goodness, and rectitude of the Ruler of the world, or to suppose that his all-wise and benevolent designs may be defeated by the folly and wickedness of human beings. But such conclusions are so palpably and extravagantly absurd, that the only alternative, the reality of a future state of existence, may be pronounced to have the force of a moral demonstration. So that, had we no other argument to produce in support of the doctrine of a future state of retribution, this alone would be sufficient to carry conviction to every mind that recognizes the existence of a Supreme Intelligence, and entertains just views of the attributes which must necessarily be displayed in his moral administration."

Things appear less mysterious to us than to the pupils of nature; yet how much that is incomprehensible remaineth for our consideration! How often we have occasion to remark the strange inequalities of life as we have viewed them, — perhaps mourned over them when they have affected our life-interests, and changed the whole aspect of existence!

When we see the head of a household smitten down in active life, taken away from the circle that depended upon him, not only for counsel, but for comfortable subsistence, and a feeble, suffering member of the same family spared, we marvel that it should be so. And when we see one at the head of a literary institution exerting a wide-spread, hallowed influence, that is to tell upon the world's regeneration — when we see such a one removed from the world, and the poor lunatic live on year after year, un blessing and un blessed, we wonder at the arrangement.

The sympathy of the public mind has recently been directed to one of these strange providences — the sudden exit of a youthful Christian ambassador who had just entered the path of usefulness — just commenced the vigorous cultivation of the moral vineyard, where he gave promise of efficient labor and marked success. Other lights have gone out, also, in various parts of Christendom, where they were much needed, as it seemed, to disperse the moral darkness ; and in all these places those live on who only make the night darker and longer, and the prospect of the dawn more dubious still. What variety we see, too, in the distribution of gifts and means ! There are many who have an ardent thirst for knowledge, the bent of whose minds is altogether toward intellectual pursuits, but who have no means to aid them in the prosecution of their favorite plans. They toil, it may be, to attain the means, but often to find in the end that they are but wrecks, mentally and physically.

Others have all the means requisite for the accomplishment of all these purposes, but no desire, no taste ; so that mankind, in view of these things, are always saying, *if things were reversed*, it would be better.

We might follow these differences, and find them existing in every possible department of life — a “disparity,” says Pollok, that hath “taught many lessons, but this taught in chief, —

Though learned by few : that God no value set,
That man should none, on goods of worldly kind,
On transitory, frail, external things,
Of migratory, ever-changing sort.
And further taught, that in the soul alone,
The thinking, reasonable, willing soul,
God placed the total excellence of man,
And meant him evermore to seek it there.”

Though there be much of mystery, it is not for us to question the propriety of God's method of discipline.

When we think that while “he works his sovereign will,” he is “treasuring up his bright designs” against a day of

revelation, — a day of rewards and just decisions, — we cease our wonderings, and settle down with the consideration that "God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain."

When we think that this life is a season of probation, of trial, and that eternity is rich in resources that will fully compensate for all the deficiencies and inequalities that trouble us so much here, our disposition to marvel is very much modified, if not lost altogether.

What though "blooming youth be snatched away by death's resistless hand;" we need not be inconsolable if the unfolding buds of virtue are to develop in greater beauty and perfection in another and endless life.

What though the haughty tyrant and shameless profligate triumph over the sufferings and downfall of the excellent of the earth, since a perfect and future administration will reverse the scales of justice, and give due recompense to both virtue and wickedness.

This life is indeed checkered. *Might* often prevails over *right*; and here again we should be lost in another maze of doubt and confusion with only a present life. But perplexities vanish, difficulties melt away, before the light that comes from another scene — from the idea of world beyond world, and life beyond life; for, as God is perfect, so will his government be perfect, and so will his intelligent creatures be made to see it, and that, too, in no partial manner, but universally.

The voice, then, of these mysteries of providence that we have glanced at, bids us look forward "beyond the bounds of time" for their full explanation.

They give strong intimations that the rough places shall be made plain, and the crooked things straight — that a perfect and final adjustment will restore the seeming want of harmony, and disclose order and design where our short-sighted, earthly vision discerned only the contrary.

CHAPTER VII.

MIND, FROM ITS VERY NATURE, IMPERISHABLE.

Brahminical Philosophy. — The Poet's Soliloquy. — Sleep and Death. — Argument of Des Cartes. — Infidel Theory of Annihilation. — Nature never warrants it. — Changes in Vegetable and Animal Kingdoms. — Flavel and Hall. — Physiological Changes.

"The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and Nature sink in years;
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amid the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds." — *Addison*.

"The sun is but a spark of fire,
A transient meteor in the sky;
The soul, immortal as its Sire,
Shall never die!" — *Montgomery*.

THE sacred books of the Brahmins have the following passage: "The soul is an inseparable portion of the great universal mind — in other words, of Brahma. Like the being from whom it emanates, it is, therefore, indestructible. It knows no distinction of time: it is free, immutable, eternal. The wind cannot pierce it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot drown it, the earth cannot absorb it. It is beyond the reach of the elements, invulnerable, invisible, universal, subsisting in all places, and at all times, and victorious over death."

The philosophy of the Brahminical school, in general, has little to commend itself to our sympathies or consideration. It is the offspring of a deluded imagination, and the vain conceits of men. Error is its foster-mother, and we are therefore prepared for a system of absurdities and unnatural development.

But, notwithstanding the absence of nearly all the elements that form the basis of our diviner system, we yet discover in the above fragment more than the shadow of truth—the germ of established hope, which, however, can find its legitimate expansion only under different influences and more genial cultivation. The plant of immortality struggled for existence under the unskilful training of such masters. It was sadly dwarfed, because that which ministered unto its life was so little understood; but we are not to be without appreciation of that which bears resemblance to the true shoot, for who is to judge effort, and award its due, save He who knows the nature of the desire which prompted the effort? We have seen the wild rose blossom in all its sweetness in a field of thistles, and the breeze, as it swept by, has conveyed some portion of that sweetness to our grateful senses, making us rejoice. So, from whatever source comes the fragrance of eternal truth, we would delight ourselves in it, though it be from the far plains where error and superstition show their rank growth, well nigh concealing the less boastful flower of Christianity, with its life-giving root.

Drops of distilled truth have been put up, even by the Hindoos, of decidedly aromatic character, and as far as the quality of the ingredients is genuine and ministers to the refined Christian sense, so far would we apply it to our use; but when they shall become conversant with the finer methods of analysis which belong to the Christian chemist, they will find themselves in possession of means to obtain richer decoctions than they have yet known.

As it is, our apprehensions are different. When we speak of the thinking, animating principle in man as being eternal, the thought of an *end* does not come into our conceptions. When we have grasped the utmost conceivable idea of number to express its duration, an infinity is still before it, wherein to unwind the limitless thread of its being, and weave the web that infinite ages of action can never finish.

Like them we believe that no element of the physical universe, or the combined action of the whole, can in any way harm the soul. It shall prove "victorious over death;" but while we affirm its everlasting consciousness, they admit its final absorption. Millions of changes may indeed be passed through, occupying an inconceivable space of time; but there comes an era in the soul's history when there is no more to be experienced, when all that can be known is known, and nothing remains but to sink into the nature of their God, and be lost.

The idea, however, of losing a distinct and conscious state of existence is not at all pleasing, and some of the followers of Vishnu are represented as offering this prayer: "O Vishnu! we do not wish for absorption, but for a state of happiness in which we shall forever see and serve thee as our lord, in which thou wilt continue as our beloved master, and we as thy servants." And such is their faith in the propitious character of their Deity, that they believe his true disciples to be graciously permitted an everlasting life near him in answer to this earnest petition.

But how meagre are hopes inspired by a system like this! There is no perfect happiness unless perpetuity be associated with it, and the word is robbed of its meaning in a future life if there cometh an end, even though that end be so far distant as to defy our present computation.

As the thought of not living again naturally tends to check every generous ambition and pursuit in this life, so, were we to triumph over death, and yet believe in final absorption, the soul, it would seem, might sink into lethargic repose, with no stimulus to activity or attainment in any direction.

There are some who advocate a philosophy even more puerile, in some respects, than that of the Hindoos—those who teach that the spiritual principle finds total annihilation in connection with the physical,—that at the dissolution of the latter, the former ceases to be.

Thus sang a poet of this order on the death of a friend : -

“Alas! the meanest flowers which gardens yield,
The vilest weeds that flourish in the field,
Which dead in wintry sepulchres appear,
Revive in spring, and bloom another year;
But we, the great, the brave, the learned, the wise,
Soon as the hand of death has closed our eyes,
In tombs forgotten lie; no suns restore;
We sleep, forever sleep, to wake no more.”

Fitting, indeed, and expressive his first word. Well might he commence, with doleful tone, Alas! for cheerless was the prospect for him. Why had he not bestowed his kindest affections upon the “weeds” and “flowers” of earth, and spent his appreciation upon those things which “revive” and bloom again, instead of indulging the sentiments of human friendship which tantalize by their exceeding brevity?

Why had he been so inconsistent as to cherish love, to strengthen the ties which bound him to one of his kind, and then mourn and waste his grief upon a hopeless, soulless clod, that must lie down in eternal sleep, “to wake no more”?

What folly was manifest in the thought of being “great,” or “brave,” or “learned,” or “wise,” since the attainment of such distinctions contributed to nothing, and was an expenditure of energy to no practical purpose whatever—simply a waste

Sceptics tell us they discover the “image of death” in “sleep;” but where is the reason to suppose that this extends beyond the tired framework of the soul, or where the evidence that the exercise of a single intellectual function is suspended by it? “Sleep relaxes the strained muscles, gives repose to the tired limbs, and shuts the wearied sense, the actual and material world to our apprehension ceasing to exist; but the mind, *the man*, claims no rest from his appropriate toil, but pursues his task in the world of dreams. All the proper and exclusive functions of the soul are then discharged as readily and continuously as in our waking hours. Reason and recol-

lection, judgment, fancy, the desires and the affections, still exercise their office; and the will, though it has lost control, for a time, of its actual servants through their fatigue, still governs an ideal kingdom, and spurs its fancied ministers."

Reason as we may, the candid mind must ever come back to the conclusion, that as sleep introduces us to new spheres of activity, so death may be, in all probability, "the portal to a spirit-land," where consciousness and power to act will still be retained. "*I think; therefore I am,*" was called "the celebrated argument" of Des Cartes. Would not the deduction be equally logical — *I am; therefore I must continue to be?*

But what saith the sceptic? After all his reasonings, this appears the sum of his comprehensive logic — *Somehow I am, and somehow I shall cease to be.* And why anything clearer? The range of his vision is extremely narrow; the platform whereon he stands is too limited to allow the free play of thought, and it must be dwarfed.

Even the manifest power in the operations of nature he confesses a hidden mystery, and all the occurrences of the physical universe, instead of being guided and governed by harmonious laws, seem to him to follow each other "by an inscrutable mechanism, or by a blind and unconscious fatality."

In "the countless aspects and ceaseless changes of the world without," he beholds only the "fortuitous concourse of atoms, self-governed, yet bound one to another by inexorable necessity, and forming an adamantine chain, that is nowhere held up or sustained save by a dim abstraction," as if it was better to have *Chaos* sit umpire, and *Chance* govern. It is not wonderful that he should wish to let drop the curtain of everlasting night, and sleep eternity away, when there was nothing more to hope for than his philosophy affords. It is only when the contest between mind and matter ceases, and a guiding Spirit is seen to animate all, that anything like harmony exists anywhere. It is true there is mystery in mind. Its operations are past human understanding. Volumes have been written in

explanation of the laws by which it acts, and still the subtle thing eludes the most curious explorer at some points; and it must be so, for it is a divine emanation, and bears the impress of the Incomprehensible. Its nature is wonderful, and this the infidel acknowledges; yet he makes it a mere machine, complex indeed, capable of many and varied revolutions, but destined to wear out under the adverse influences of time, becoming, not a mass of ungathered ruins, but an absolute nothing. Mind naturally desires a reason for things; but where is the evidence of annihilation?

Not an instance of it appears in Nature, so far as we know. We may look through the whole material system, and the keenest vision, the most scientific observation, coupled with the most correct experiment, have never been able to ascertain the remotest probability of anything like an absolute expulsion of even the smallest particles from the universe of matter.

No reason exists for us to suppose that in all the regions of space a single atom has ever been, or ever will be, annihilated. It is true a countless variety of changes are constantly taking place in the natural world. We witness them in every department. The starry heavens present different aspects at different times. Now a comet sweeps with strange velocity through its ethereal pathway of millions of miles, and again meteors of wonderful brilliancy dart from every portion of the nightly sky. The sun, the moon, and the several planets, change, as it were, their countenances, showing that mutability is characteristic of all created things.

So, too, upon the earth the incessant workings of change excite interest and minister to alarm. "Mountains are crumbling down, the caverns of the ocean filling up; islands are emerging from the bottom of the sea, and again sinking into the abyss; the ocean is frequently shifting its boundaries, and trees, plants, and waving grain now adorn many tracts which were once overwhelmed with the foaming billows." Earthquakes have swept towns and villages from existence in a moment of time;

volcanoes have poured their streams of burning lava over the fields and homes of men, scorching the former and destroying the latter for the use of their occupants, while "the solid strata within the bowels of the earth have been bent and disrupted by the operation of some tremendous power."

What changes, too, are manifest in the atmosphere which surrounds us, wrought by the action of the gaseous elements, "animal respiration, the process of evaporation, the action of winds, and the agencies of light, heat, and the electric and magnetic fluids"! Seasons come and go, and the vegetable kingdom is seen in all its glory and prosperity, or bearing the unmistakable signs of decay and final dissolution. Spring and summer make everything beautiful with buds and blossoms; the wind makes sweet harmonies as it plays on the myriad harps strung by almighty skill; the earth is covered with a carpet of shaded green; flowers lift their heads by mossy banks and gayly dancing streams; the leafy groves are vocal with the songs that come from Nature's orchestra—lovely minstrels; ten thousand insects hum away their gladsome life, and the clouds of heaven look down upon the scene, exercising a grateful guardianship, and ever and anon pouring their secrets and treasures into the bosom of that earth which supports and ministers unto all. While the spirit of man exults in the beauty and utility of such a state of things, a change comes. A frosty and cold-hearted monarch passeth by, and as if jealous of so much smiling beauty, he lays his blighting hand upon everything. Under his influence the clouds become congealed, and less confiding; the queen of the floral realm goes into a decline over the untimely death of her beautiful subjects; the variegated carpet in the vast hall of nature grows lustreless and dull under the ceaseless tread of the haughty despot; the insect throng hush their notes, expecting their winding-sheet; the groves are silent, for the musicians are gone to hold a concert under more auspicious circumstances; the ten thousand pleasurable instruments of music hung upon the forest trees

are unstrung; the sweet symphonies abroad are turned into low wails, and the children of nature go mourning to their graves. It is a universal burial. The temples of nature are left desolate, for the worshipful throng that ministered at her altar and chanted her praises have died. The flowers and shrubbery of the grounds about have lost their beauty, and everything seems merged in general decay.

But it is only *seeming*. There is nothing lost—nothing annihilated. These changes fulfil the designs of Providence in maintaining and perpetuating the beauty and harmony of nature. When flowers, leaves, shrubs, and plants droop and die, returning to their native elements, we expect new combinations, new forms of beauty, and do see them arise, phoenix-like, to take the places that had been made vacant; and so all the changes we might contemplate, or even conceive, are nothing more nor less than simply a change of form, the parts still remaining the same, “not to be annihilated by any power of nature, and retaining still their specific solidity, magnitude, &c.”

Witness the various tribes of animal existence, as they pass from infancy to maturity and old age, or from one state and manner of life to another and far different: observe the insect world, the little creatures that measure their steps upon a bit of earth, and then soar aloft in the air—things of marvellous beauty. How strange and mysterious the changes to which these are subject; and if, in all these transformations—all these changes and revolutions in nature—no particle of matter is ever lost, or reduced to nothing, is it not highly reasonable to suppose that the thinking principle in man will survive every change, and exist, *active* and *perceptive*, notwithstanding the dissolution of that which surrounds it?

When we see the crawling worm burst the confinement of its self-wrought tomb and come forth a beauteous form, to mount upward on expanded wings, we cannot but read in it the symbol of man's destiny. As it emerges into a more glo-

rious existence, we are led to think we are yet but the "rudiments" of what we shall be, when the disembodied spirit shall be ushered into its final state, and be invested with the new power immortality will be capable of giving, having changed the grovelling form of the terrestrial for the glory and expansiveness of the celestial.

If annihilation forms no part of God's plan in the material world, if every particle of matter is reserved and employed for new creations in a perpetual round of changes in the natural world, how shall we suppose it to be carried on in the world of mind, that world where God has left the strongest evidence of his mightiest displays, and the indications of most comprehensive design? Can we indulge the idea for a moment that the benevolent and infinite Creator would every day set in operation the delicate machinery of a thousand minds, with all their associated power of capacity, and at the same time break the springs and crush the power of a thousand others that had issued from his hand, leaving them as idle fragments and unnecessary atoms in his universe, or expunging all trace whatever of their existence from the earth?

Shall there be eternal forgetfulness with the being for whom the universe was created, and yet that structure remain, through every variety of change, as if matter was of more consequence than mind, and of longer duration?

Will the dust and rubbish of earth be cherished, to the utter exclusion of the rich gems that appear in the mine of spiritual being? Will the basest metals be retained, and the most valuable thrown away? It is contrary to worldly wisdom, and is the Divine less careful? Man would never weave a fabric of rare value and beauty only that he might please himself by rending the fine tissue; nor build a structure of rich material and magnificent proportion, that he might witness its downfall, and see how it would look as a splendid ruin.

But all comparisons fail. Nothing material can shadow forth the spiritual, or its immense superiority. No illustration can

show the difference between the doings of the finite and the infinite. The first is folly, the last is highest wisdom. Should God annihilate, he has a right to do it; but that he will, is at variance with all we know of him; that he gives grace and beauty to scenes on earth, for man's benefit, and then blots him out forever, when he has scarce begun to know what they were made for, is an idea it seems impious to entertain.

The works of genius — the productions of gifted minds — live on through centuries and ages, influencing succeeding generations, and never lessening in power with the lapse of time. Is it only the works of *man*, the little emanations, the little sparks that are emitted, — is it only these that are immortal?

Is the solitary sunbeam greater than the sun, the murmuring rivulet greater than the ocean? If so, then is a single effort of mind greater than the ten thousand achievements it is capable of working out, larger and more expansive than the originating principle itself.

We have in the literary heavens a bright galaxy of names — men whose sublime conceptions and lofty ideals have done much in bringing the human race up to a higher standard of taste and excellence. In science and philosophy we have a constellated host that have poured cheering light upon a pathway which would otherwise have remained dark indeed. In morals and theology we have a substantial army of goodly soldiers, that were ready to leave themselves upon the field rather than lose the victory for truth and right. How many such we might speak of who went down to the grave with their armor on, battling in what they thought a glorious cause, regardless of ease or self-interest in any direction!

We keep them in remembrance; but while the memory of their deeds and the influence of them remain, are they enveloped in the darkness of eternal night? Surely if the efforts of mind live, mind itself is more surely immortal. We cannot think that

"Thoughts that know no bounds,
 But, self-inspired, rise upward, searching out
 The Eternal Mind, — the Father of all thought, —
 Will become mere tenants of a tomb,
 Dwellers in darkness, who the illuminate realms
 Of uncreated light have visited, and lived —
 Lived in the dreadful splendor of that throne,
 Which One, with gentle hand, the veil of flesh
 Lifting, that hung 'twixt man and it, revealed
 In glory, — throne before which, even now,
 Our souls, moved by prophetic power, bow down
 Rejoicing, yet at their own natures awed —
 Souls that Thee know by a mysterious sense,
 Thou awful, unseen Presence! are they quenched?
 Or borne they on, hid from our mortal eyes
 By that bright day which ends not, as the sun
 His robe of light flings round the glittering stars?
 And with our frames do perish all our loves?
 Do those that took their root, and put forth buds,
 And their soft leaves unfolded, in the warmth
 Of mutual hearts, grow up and live in beauty,
 Then fade and fall, like fair, unconscious flowers?
 Are thoughts and passions, that to the tongue give speech,
 And make it send forth winning harmonies, —
 That to the cheek do give its living glow,
 And vision in the eye the soul intense
 With that for which there is no utterance, —
 Are these the body's accidents? — no more? —
 To live in it, and, when that dies, go out
 Like the burnt taper's flame?"

Is this the destiny of thought? Look at the soul, — the
 home of thought, — its nature, and see if there be any possible
 tendency to annihilation in the elements of its composition.
 But how absurd to talk of the composition of mind! Is it not
 a simple, indivisible thing, distinct from matter and from all
 the laws which govern matter — an absolute stranger to mix-
 ture, and consequently subject to far different conditions from
 those we call material substances?

Said John Flavel, "Death is the great divider, but it is of
 things that are divisible. The more simple, pure, and refined
 any material thing is, by so much the more permanent and

durable it is found to be. The nearer it approaches to the nature of spirit, the farther it is removed from the power of death; but that which is not material, or mixed at all, is wholly exempt from the stroke and power of death. It is from the contrariant qualities and jarring humors in mixed bodies that they come under the law and power of dissolution. Matter and mixture are the doors at which death enters naturally upon the creatures."

"So, too," saith Robert Hall, "the spirit of man is something uncompounded; therefore not destructible; not to be scattered by winds, or consumed by flames. No outward force can touch thought, can affect the inward consciousness of guilt or innocence. Spirit naturally ascends to God, the Infinite Spirit, the Father of all spirits, as dust naturally returns to dust. If God does not destroy the spirit of his creature, it cannot be destroyed; but what reason can be assigned why he should destroy that which is the chief work of his creative power? What atom of matter did he ever yet annihilate? Is it conceivable, then, that he should annihilate that alone which partakes most of his own nature, and renders the creature capable of an immortal union with himself?

"Can mind, which is an eternal thing, an emanation of the Father of spirits, be supposed to perish? No; be assured you are born to immortality, as your natural inheritance; your being, once commenced, must go on forever."

All presumption that death will crush out the living spirit forever must be based upon the supposition that it is a mixture of substances, and, as such, exposed to the influences of decay; but human analysis will be long finding evidence to this end.

All our consciousness of mental operations, and all our knowledge of mind itself, are contrary to such an idea. Matter may be separated into numberless parts, and still exist, — one portion here and another there, perfectly independent; one part in motion and another at rest. But who ever affirmed this of mind, or conceived so miserable an absurdity?

Could it for once be asserted and proved that the perceptive power of our being is the joint production of dissimilar substances, there would be little remaining but to resign ourselves to the hopeless prospect of annihilation, for the door would then be left ajar for this hideous spectre to come in and take possession; but it is so plain, so unmistakably true, that the power of consciousness, and consequently the *conscious being*, is an indivisible thing, that there hardly appears a crevice for the admission of so unwelcome an intruder.

Then, when we speak of individual mind as a single thing, independent of all others, but indivisible in itself, — and it seems inconsistent to speak in any other way, — it follows, “that our organized bodies are no more ourselves, or part of ourselves, than any other matter around us.” “The dissolution of several organized bodies,” says Butler, “supposing ourselves to have successively animated them, would have no more conceivable tendency to destroy the living beings, *ourselves*, or deprive us of living faculties, the faculties of perception and of action, than the dissolution of any foreign matter which we are capable of receiving impressions from, and making use of for the common occasions of life.”

It is true that such is the peculiarity of our mental constitution, such its intangibility, that we may not prove by experimental observation, perhaps, its strict unity; but as there are self-evident truths, — truths the intellect bids us accept with unquestionable integrity, — so we bow to the unerring mandate, and believe what our own consciousness tells us is really so. Our bodies are only the mediums through which we perceive objects of sense; they are not that which perceives at all; how, then, can any one suppose that the removal of the body can be the destruction of the soul? or how can one be less himself from the cessation of the bodily functions? The eye may become dim, and cease altogether to convey impressions of external objects; the ear may refuse to transmit sound, and in deed a great portion of the body may become as it were dead, as

has been seen in an instance already recorded, — and we should never think that, because of this, personal identity is lost.

This might happen to a friend, and he would be no less a friend; to ourselves, and we should be no less ourselves. Were it otherwise, — were we grossly to compound spirit with matter, — then, as our friends are subject to these changes, and especially as they draw near the season of old age, bowing under the weight of physical infirmity, they would become to us other than their very selves, and we should mourn hopelessly; but when we think it is only a worn-out garment they are throwing aside; that the same soul, the same loves, hopes, and feelings exercise and animate them; that they are capable of the same sympathy and appreciation as when the framework of matter was stronger about them, — then we are cheered, and cannot avoid the supposition that the spirit does and will exist independent of the body.

According to certain established physiological laws, we have in the course of our lives been subject to repeated changes, having lost a great part, if not the whole, of our entire bodies; but are we less assured of our own particular identity now, than at the remotest period of recollection in our past history? And when we are called to lay aside at once and altogether our vestments of mortality, according to another established law of our being, why shall we not remain the same?

“That the alienation has been gradual in one case, and in the other will be more at once, does not prove anything to the contrary. We have passed undestroyed through those many and great revolutions of matter, so peculiarly appropriated to ourselves; why should we imagine death would be so fatal to us? Nor can it be objected, that what is thus alienated, or lost, is no part of our original, solid body, but only adventitious matter; because we may lose entire limbs, which must have contained many solid parts and vessels of the original body; or, if this be not admitted, we have no proof that any of these solid parts are dissolved or alienated by death; though, by the way,

we are very nearly related to that extraneous or adventitious matter, while it continues united to and distending the several parts of our solid body. But, after all, the relation a person bears to those parts of his body to which he is the most nearly related, what does it appear to amount to but this, that the living agent and those parts of the body mutually affect each other? And the same thing—the same in kind, though not in degree—may be said of all foreign matter, which gives us ideas, and which we have any power over. From these observations the whole ground of the imagination is removed, that the dissolution of any matter is the destruction of a living agent, from the interest he once had in such matter;” and if the dissolution of matter in which we are most nearly interested is not our dissolution, and if the destruction of several of the organs and instruments of perception and motion is not our destruction, where is the ground to think “that the dissolution of any other matter or destruction of any other organs and instruments, will be the dissolution or destruction of living agents, from the like kind of relation”—a relation we peculiarly sustain to those things which we find dissolved by death.

Moreover, we exist, creatures of a twofold nature, living two lives, as it were, in one, two streams meeting, counter-currents, each having its own characteristics and calling for its own appropriate consideration. We all know there is a state of sensation, and another of perception, the former dependent upon the organs of sense and instruments of motion for life, activity, and enjoyment, and the latter independent of all assistance from this source, finding its stimulus in the mind itself, inasmuch as the power of reflection may exist in the greatest intensity: we are capable of great pleasure and of corresponding pain which our senses have nothing to do with it at all. We can reason, remember, and love without any aid whatever from the body; but the life of sensation can be maintained only through its ministrations, so that while final dissolution must inevitably destroy the one, it can in no sense affect or destroy the other

There are mortal diseases, also, which render the body perfectly powerless for a long time, while the mind is clear and active. The tenement about the living inhabitant may be slowly taken down. Here a pin may be wrenched out, and there a pillar removed, and the whole may quiver and shake, but still remain. At length it falls ; but the conscious agent finds no burial in its ruins, for he has fled — at least, such is our belief from the evidence before us.

Persons in the last moments of life oftentimes appear to have the power of reflection in the most vigorous exercise, and more active than at any previous time in their history. The body is weak, the senses fail, but “apprehension, memory; and reason” were never more true to their nature and office than now. The power to show affection by kind and expressive acts is altogether gone ; but look upon the countenance upon which Death has placed his signet, and see how every lineament of that countenance testifies to the strength of the undying principle of love. So with every quality of mind : up to the last gasp of mortal life, we find them unimpaired. We do not say there are no diseases that dim the brightness of the reflective faculties, for sometimes dark shadows eclipse them ; but how often with these has returning consciousness come at the moment of death, like the sun emerging from darkness, to assert the certainty of its existence and the reality of its beams. There seems no probability, by any possible view we can take of it, that disease in any form can prove the destruction of the reflecting powers ; and if, up to the last boundary of time, we find spirit-life in active operation, is there any reason, in view of what we have said, to suppose that death will even suspend its exercise, or interrupt its continuous flow hereafter ? Therefore, to use the language of Butler again, “for aught we know of ourselves, of our present life, and of death, death may immediately, in the natural course of things, put us into a higher and more enlarged state of life, as our birth does — a state in which our capacities and sphere of perception, and of action, may be much greater than at present.

For, as our relation to our external organs of sense renders us capable of existing in our present state of sensation, so it may be the only natural hinderance to our existing, immediately and of course, in a higher state of reflection." Of kindred sentiment is Rousseau, as will appear from the following passage from his writings: "It is very plain," says he, "that, during my corporeal life, as I perceive nothing but by means of my senses, whatever is not submitted to their cognizance must escape me. When the union of the body and soul is broken, I conceive that the one may be dissolved, and the other preserved entire. Why should the dissolution of the one necessarily bring on that of the other? On the contrary, being so different in their natures, their state of union is a state of violence, and when it is broken, they both return to their natural situation; the active and living substance regains all the force it had employed in giving motion to the passive and dead substance to which it had been united. Alas! my failings make me but too sensible that man is but half alive in this life, and that the life of the soul commences at the death of the body."

But why talk of annihilation? The spirit of man loathes it, utterly repudiates it, notwithstanding the professions of a few to the contrary; all nature cries out against it, and a voice everywhere meets us with the startling annunciation, "Man, thou shalt never die." There is no possible light in which we can look at this subject, no point of view from whence we can contemplate the soul of man and the perfections of its Creator, without coming to the conclusion that it is not only improbable, but even the very height of absurdity, to suppose that the spark of intelligence struck from the divine forge will ever be extinguished.

It is kindled by the *Heavenly Workman*, and possesses an inherent power and energy that cannot be beaten from it, though it be subject to the adverse action of all the elements of earth, air, and water.

When we consider this, when we look at the decaying prop-

erties of matter, and the undecaying nature of mind, we find ourselves naturally revolving the idea that this visible, material universe may crumble and fall; but this "spark," which sheds its light in our souls, can never go out; this living principle can never cease to be active.

Supposing that we were in actual possession of the knowledge that death will indeed bring *suspension* to all our active and perceptive powers, this even would not argue anything as to their *destruction*, for there is a wide difference between the two; but we have not that knowledge, nor any indication of the slightest foundation for it; and how much wiser, instead of seeking to involve our "being's being" in contradiction, to take the weight of evidence in favor of immortality, and meet the inducements to the work of preparation which such a prospect manifestly demands!

Try as we may, we cannot make ourselves

"As summer gusts, of sudden birth and doom;"

for the voice of Nature is the voice of God, and this tells us our influence shall be felt amid other scenes, and on other shores; that the current of our lives runs parallel with the infinite.

CHAPTER VIII.

INEXPLICABLE MYSTERIES ATTEND THE DENIAL OF A FUTURE.

The Coliseum. — Earth a Tomb. — Meditations on the Supposition of no Future. — Birth of Error. — Waste not in God's Plans. — Immortality a desirable Fiction, if it be one.

“ If the breath
Be life itself, and not its task and tent,
If even a soul like Milton's can know death,
O man! thou vessel, purposeless, unmeant,
Yet drone-hive strange of phantom purposes!
Surplus of Nature's dread activity,
Which, as she gazed on some nigh-finished vase,
Retreating slow, with meditative pause,
She formed with restless hands unconsciously!
Blank accident! nothing's anomaly!” — *Coleridge.*

MODERN travellers tell us that when the moon comes forth in her quiet beauty, and lets fall her silvery beams upon the Coliseum, — the largest amphitheatre, not only in proud Rome, but in all the world, — the whole seems shrouded in *mystery*.

Imagination becomes the guide that opens deep vaults of gloom, from whence issue the “shadowy forms of emperor and lictor, vestal virgin, gladiator, and martyr, in long and silent procession.” The breezes which play among the broken arches and around the lofty columns are changed, as it were, into voices to proclaim the triumphs of the past — a time when the vast arena rang with the shouts and acclamations of a crowd of living men, and witnessed a tumultuous wave of human life passing on to its own shore, there to find no reflex power, but to lose itself in “absorbing sands,” or the porous bosom of the rocky guards stationed as consuming sentinels along the line it met.

Centuries ago the elevated seats of this massive structure held throngs of people, who were enthusiastic over spectacles that find no toleration in the present age of civilization. The light of eyes to more than fourscore thousand was spent upon single exhibitions, at frequent intervals; but the light has long since gone out, and a mighty chasm appears upon the spot once so brightly illuminated. The eager multitudes sheltered by this magnificent building, and the excited combatants who fed their sensual ambition, have all passed away, and with them the glory of their works. Age by age this massive structure has yielded to the pressure of Time's destroying hand — its walls have crumbled and fallen — its strong pillars lie prostrate, so that, to those who now behold it, it appears — "the monarch of ruins."

"Built," says one, "of indestructible materials, and seemingly for eternity, of a size, material, and form to defy the 'strong hours' which conquer all, it has bowed its head to their touch, and passed into the inevitable cycle of decay." To the traveller this gigantic wreck of human enterprise and ingenuity is an object of never-failing interest; but our lingerings here for a moment are only that we may nourish thoughts that found birth in its shadows; that we may clothe an idea with drapery furnished at this place, albeit it be so thin as scarce to suffice for the chilling atmosphere into which we come; for the finest and proudest things of earth seem to lose their value, and prove utterly inadequate, when we place them beside the ethereal treasure committed to our keeping, which we cherish more fondly than anything else, even while questioning the reality of its existence. All earth might be in ruins, and it would be nothing to the wreck of mind. As we stood, in imagination, by the lofty columns of the Coliseum, the thought was suggested that, as the strong pillars to the mighty edifice, so is truth to the mind of man. Remove therefrom the colossal truth of immortality, and if there be anything significant in the "dread magnificence of ruins," it

is realized then. But why associate poetry with so melancholy a waste? There is no language serious or weighty enough to set forth the dreary aspect of such a world.

“A soul without reflection, like a pile
Without inhabitant, to ruin runs.”

And imagine no alternative but to witness these millions of wrecks on every side, until we ourselves are added to the general ruin. Earth now is a vast tomb. We surrender up our individual being, and go “to mix forever with the elements,” to be kindred to the “insensible rock,” and to the “sluggish clod;” but this is only said of the dust-made body. If earth should claim mind, who would not say, “Give me the wings of the morning, that I may fly from the awful sepulchre.” The moonlight might look coldly down upon the universal cemetery, disclosing deeper vaults and darker shadows than were ever seen in the mightiest and most extensive ruin we have yet conceived. It defies all comparison. Man might drop in his course, the sunlight and the starlight rest upon the fallen thing, but the revivifying influence of no brighter rays be ever known. As it is, the most mysterious of all things is life; but how much more mysterious when we think of it for such an end! The trophies of art may fade away, the proudest monuments of genius fall, and kingdoms and empires even vanish, leaving no trace; but for soul to find oblivion is too much. We cannot fathom so deep an ocean of mystery as this; and because we cannot, may we not believe that there is a life beyond the dark stream that separates this world from another?

Ambitious men, wishing to immortalize their names, and transmit their memories to future generations, have spent long periods of time and great wealth in rearing structures seemingly defying the ravages of time. Especially is this the case in the old world, where mammoth efforts of skill and genius are still manifest, — many of them, as relics, wonderful and

full of interest indeed ; but how immeasurably inferior is the combined skill of men in all ages to the marvellous display in a single mind ; and shall not these nobler exhibitions of a Divine Workman survive man's creations, though they be found standing at the end of time ?

A learned earl was once troubled with atheistical suggestions. He was constantly revolving the self-proposed inquiry, Is there a God ? If he entertained a negative view, there appeared so many problems he could not solve, he was wavering and dissatisfied ; and finally he abandoned it, saying, " If I could give any account how myself, or anything else, had a being without God, how there came so uniform and so constant a consent of mankind, of all ages, tempers, and educations (otherwise differing so much in their apprehensions), about the being of God, the immortality of the soul, and religion, in which they could not likely either deceive so many, or, being so many, could not be deceived, I could be an atheist."

In like manner, if we can answer the various enigmas, if we can satisfactorily dispose of the questions that arise upon the denial of immortality, then may we believe there is no future. In such a case, —

" Why rejoices

Thy heart with hollow joy for hollow good ?

Why cowl thy face beneath the mourner's hood ?

Why waste thy sighs and thy lamenting voices ?

Be sad ! be glad ! be neither ! Seek or shun !

Thou hast no reason why ! Thou canst have none ! "

Ah, if man is not immortal, then are God's ways and man's being unaccountable. But so admirably is this thought presented by a Christian philosopher, we give his own words, their beauty and fitness being the only apology for its length. After speaking of the confusion and mystery everywhere prevalent, in the natural, moral, and spiritual world, on the denial of this truth he says, —

" Let us suppose, for a few moments, that there is no state of existence beyond the grave, and, consequently, that the

supposed discoveries of revelation are a mere delusion, and consider some of the gloomy prospects and absurd consequences to which such a supposition necessarily leads.

"I shall suppose myself standing in an attitude of serious contemplation and of anxious inquiry respecting the various scenes and objects which surround me, and the events that pass under my review.

"I first of all look into myself, and inquire whence I came; whither I am going; who produced me; of what my body is composed; what is the nature of my senses and of the thinking principle I feel within me; and for what purpose was I ushered into being. I perceive in my body a wonderful mechanism which I cannot comprehend; I find by experience that my will exercises a sovereign power over my muscular system, so that my hands, feet, arms, and limbs are disposed to obey every impulse, and, at the signal of a wish, to transport my body from one place to another. I find my thinking principle intimately connected with my corporeal frame, and both acting reciprocally on each other; but I cannot fathom the manner in which these operations are effected. I feel ardent desires after enjoyments in which I shall never participate, and capacities for knowledge and improvement which I never can attain. I feel restless and uneasy, even amidst the beauties of nature and the pleasures of the senses.

"I ask, Whence proceeds the want I feel amidst all my enjoyments? Wherefore can I never cease from wishing for something in addition to what I now possess? Whence arises the disgust that so quickly succeeds every sensitive enjoyment, and the want I feel even in the midst of abundance? I ask why I was called into existence at this point of duration rather than at any other period of that incomprehensible eternity which is past, or of that which is yet to come; why, amidst the vast spaces with which I am encompassed, and the innumerable globes which surround me, I was chained down to this obscure corner of creation, from which I feel unable to trans-

port myself; why I was ushered into life in Britain, and not in Papua or New Zealand; and why I was formed to walk erect, and not prone, as the inferior animals. To all such inquiries I can find no satisfactory answers; the whole train of circumstances connected with my existence appears involved in impenetrable darkness and mystery. Of one thing only I am fully assured — that my body shall, ere long, be dissolved and mingle with the dust, and my intellectual faculties, desires, and capacities for knowledge be forever annihilated in the tomb. I shall then be reduced to nothing, and be as though I never had been, while myriads of beings, like myself, shall start into existence, and perish in like manner, in perpetual succession, throughout an eternity to come.

“I look backward through ages past; I behold everything wrapped in obscurity, and perceive no traces of a beginning to the vast system around me. I stretch forward toward futurity, and perceive no prospect of an end. All things appear to continue as they were from generation to generation, invariably subjected to the same movements, revolutions, and changes, without any distinct marks which indicate either a beginning or an end. I look around on the scene of terrestrial nature; I perceive many beauties in the verdant landscape, and many objects the mechanism of which is extremely delicate and admirable; I inhale the balmy zephyrs, am charmed with the music of the groves, the splendor of the sun, and the variegated coloring spread over the face of creation. But I behold other scenes, which inspire melancholy and terror — the tempest, the hurricane, and the tornado; the sirocco, the samiel, and other poisonous winds of the desert; the appalling thunder-cloud, the forked lightnings, the earthquake, shaking kingdoms, and the volcano pouring fiery streams around its base, which desolate cities and villages in their course.

“I behold in one place a confused assemblage of the ruins of nature, in the form of snow-capped mountains, precipices, hasms, and caverns; in another, extensive marshes and im-

mense deserts of barren sand; and in another, a large proportion of the globe, a scene of sterile desolation, bound in the fetters of eternal ice. I know not what opinion to form of a world where so many beauties are blended with so much deformity, and so many pleasures mingled with so many sorrows and scenes of terror, or what ideas to entertain of Him who formed it.

"But I need give myself no trouble in inquiring into such subjects; for my time on earth is short and uncertain, and when I sink into the arms of death I shall have no more connection with the universe.

"I take a retrospective view of the moral world in past ages, in so far as authentic history serves as a guide, and perceive little else but anarchy, desolation, and carnage — the strong oppressing the weak, the powerful and wealthy trampling under foot the poor and indigent, plunderers and murderers ravaging kingdoms and drenching the earth with human gore. I behold the virtuous and innocent persecuted, robbed, and massacred, while bloody tyrants and oppressors roll in their splendid chariots, and revel amidst the luxuries of a palace. In such scenes I perceive nothing like regularity or order, nor any traces of justice or equity in the several allotments of mankind; for, since their whole existence terminates in the grave, the virtuous sufferer can never be rewarded, nor the unrighteous despot suffer the punishment due to his crimes. The great mass of human beings appear to be the sport of circumstances, the victims of oppression, and the dupes of knavery and ambition, and the moral world at large an assemblage of discordant elements tossed about like dust before the whirlwind. I hear virtue applauded, and vice denounced as odious and hateful. But what is virtue? A shadow, a phantom, an empty name! Why should I follow after Virtue, if she interrupts my pleasures; and why should I forsake Vice, if she points out the path to present enjoyment? It is my wisdom to enjoy life during the short period it continues; and if riches be con

drive to my enjoyment of happiness, should I fear to procure them either by deceit, perjury, or rapine? If sensual indulgence contribute to my pleasure, why should I refrain from drunkenness, or any other action that suits my convenience or gratifies my passions, since present enjoyments are all I can calculate upon, and no retributions await me beyond the grave?

"I feel myself subjected to a variety of sufferings, disappointments, and sorrows — to poverty and reproach, loss of friends, corporeal pains, and mental anguish. I am frequently tortured by recollections of the past, the feeling of the present, and the dread of approaching sufferings. But I see no object to be attained, no end to be accomplished, by my subjection to such afflictions. I suffer merely for the purpose of feeling pain, wasting my body, and hastening its dissolution. I am sick only to languish under the burden of a feeble, emaciated frame; perplexed and downcast only to sink into deeper perplexities and sorrows; oppressed with cares and difficulties only to enter on a new scene of danger and suffering. No drop of comfort mingles itself with the bitter cup of sorrow; no affliction is sweetened and alleviated by the prospect of a better world; for the gloomy mansions of the grave bound my views, and terminate all my hopes and fears. How, then, can I be easy under my sufferings? How can I be cordially resigned to the destiny which appointed them? How can I trace the benevolence of a superior Being in permitting me thus to be pained and tormented for no end? I will endeavor to bear them with resolute desperation, merely because I am borne down by necessity to pain and affliction, and cannot possibly avoid them.

"I lift up my eyes to the regions above, and contemplate the wonders of the starry frame. What an immensity of suns, systems, and worlds burst upon my view, when I apply the telescope to the spaces of the firmament! How incalculable their number! how immeasurable their distance! how immense

their magnitude ! how glorious their splendor ! how sublime their movements ! When I attempt to grasp this stupendous scene, my imagination is bewildered, and my faculties overpowered with wonder and amazement. I gaze ; I ponder ; I feel a longing desire to know something further respecting the nature and destination of these distant orbs ; but my vision is bounded to a general glimpse, my powers are limited, and when I would fly away to those distant regions, I find myself chained down, by an overpowering force, to the diminutive ball on which I dwell. Wherefore, then, were the heavens so beautifully adorned, and so much magnificence displayed in their structure, and why were they ever presented to my view, since I am never to become further acquainted with the scenes they unfold ? Perhaps this is the last glance I shall take of the mighty concave before my eyes have closed in endless night.

“ ‘ Wherefore was light given to him that is in misery — to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in ? ’ Had I been enclosed in a gloomy dungeon, my situation had been tolerable ; but here I stand, as in a splendid palace, without comfort and without hope, expecting death every moment to terminate my prospects ; and when it arrives, the glories of the heavens to me will be annihilated forever.

“ I behold science enlarging its boundaries, and the arts advancing toward perfection. I see numerous institutions organizing, and hear lectures on philosophy delivered for the improvement of mankind, and I am invited to take a part in those arrangements which are calculated to produce a general diffusion of knowledge among all ranks. But of what use is knowledge to beings who are soon to lose all consciousness of existence ? It requires many weary steps and sleepless nights to climb the steep ascent of science ; and when we have arrived at the highest point which mortals have ever reached, we descry still loftier regions which we never can approach ; our footing fails, and down we sink into irretrievable ruin. If our progress in science here were introductory to a future scene of

knowledge and enjoyment, it would be worthy of being prosecuted by every rational intelligence; but to beings who are uncertain whether they shall exist in the universe for another day, it is not only superfluous, but unfriendly to their present enjoyments. For, the less knowledge they acquire of the beauties and sublimities of nature, and the more brutish, ignorant, and sottish they become, the less they will feel at the moment when they are about to be launched into non-existence. Let the mass of mankind, then, indulge themselves in whatever frivolous amusements they may choose; do not interrupt their sensual pleasures by vainly attempting to engage them in intellectual pursuits; let them eat, drink, and revel, for to-morrow they die. All that is requisite is, to entwine the chains of despotism around their necks, to prevent them from aspiring after the enjoyment of their superiors.

"In short, I endeavor to form some conceptions of the attributes of that *Great Unknown Cause* which produced all things around me. But my thoughts become bewildered amidst a maze of unaccountable operations, of apparent contradictions and inconsistencies. I evidently perceive that the Creator of the universe is possessed of boundless power, but I see no good reason to conclude that he exercises unerring wisdom, unbounded goodness, and impartial justice. I perceive, indeed, some traces of wisdom in the construction of my body and its several organs of sensation, and of goodness in the smiling day, the flowery landscape, and the fertile plains; but I know not how to reconcile these with some other part of his operations. How can I attribute the perfection of wisdom to One who has implanted in my constitution desires which will never be gratified, and furnished me with moral and intellectual faculties which will never be fully exercised, and who has permitted the moral world, in every age, to exhibit a scene of disorder?

"I perceive no evidences of his benevolence in subjecting me to a variety of sorrows and sufferings, which accomplish no

end but the production of pain • in tantalizing me with hopes, and alarming me with fears of futurity, which are never to be realized, and in throwing a veil of mystery over all his purposes and operations.

“Nor can I trace anything like impartial justice in the bestowment of his favors, for disappointments and sorrows are equally the lot of the righteous and the wicked; and frequently it happens that the innocent are punished and disgraced, while the guilty are permitted to glory in their crimes. All that I can plainly perceive is the operation of uncontrollable power, directed by no principle but caprice, and accomplishing nothing that can inspire ardent affection, or secure the permanent happiness of rational beings.

“Such are some of the gloomy reflections of a hopeless mortal, whose prospect is bounded by the grave; and such are some of the horrible consequences which the denial of a future state necessarily involves. It throws a veil of darkness over the scenes of creation, and wraps in impenetrable mystery the purposes for which man was created; it exhibits the moral world as a chaotic mass of discordant elements, accomplishing no end, and controlled by no intelligent agency; it represents mankind as connected with each other merely by time and place, as formed merely for sensual enjoyment, and destined to perish with the brutes; it subverts the foundations of moral action, removes the strongest motives to the practice of virtue, and opens the floodgates of every vice; it removes the anchor of hope from the anxious mind, and destroys every principle that has a tendency to support us in the midst of sufferings; it throws a damp on every effort to raise mankind to the dignity of their intellectual and moral natures, and is calculated to obstruct the progress of useful science; it prevents the mind from investigating and admiring the beauties of creation, and involves in a deeper gloom the ruins of nature which are scattered over the globe; it terminates every prospect of becoming more fully acquainted with the glories of the firmament, and

every hope of beholding the plans of Providence completely unfolded. It involves the character of the Deity in awful obscurity ; it deprives him of the attributes of infinite wisdom, benevolence, and rectitude, and leaves him little more than boundless omnipotence, acting at random, and controlled by no beneficent agency. In short, it obliterates every motive to the performance of noble and generous actions, damps the finest feelings and affections of humanity, leads to universal scepticism, cuts off the prospect of everything which tends to cheer the traveller in his pilgrimage through life, and presents to his view nothing but an immense blank, overspread with the blackness of darkness forever."

And who would wish to plunge himself into such a labyrinth of mystery and doubt as this — to envelop himself with a cloud so thick as not to admit even a ray of light to cheer a solitary portion of his existence, brief as he makes it, with the supposition considered?

So much absurdity, such infatuation, would be unworthy a rational being. In all the departments of science and philosophy it would be counted worse than folly to reject such an amount of evidence bearing upon the truth of propositions, as is manifest here. But men of science often attempt to establish the truth of a principle or problem by showing the unphilosophical nature and absurd consequences of a contrary course of reasoning and action ; and shall not the same method of demonstration be equally applicable and conclusive in the more vital and important subject before us?

There are two systems, the one *falsehood* and the other *truth*. The former is, indeed, of man's creating ; for God is truth, and one grand, universal system of truth only comes forth from his hand. The system of error first appeared at the introduction of sin, when was instituted an order of things that brought the opinions of man into variance with the ways of God. Falsehood then laid down her line, and declared *it* the boundary to which mankind might come in their earthly

journey, and *Truth* erected her sign, saying, "This is the way to light; walk ye in it." The principles of the two are entirely antagonistic, so that if the correctness and the claims of one can be proved and maintained, the other need not, and cannot, arrogate to itself anything whatever. With these data, if it be found that the disbelief in immortality belongs more appropriately to the system of falsehood than to the other; that all the reasonings and conclusions to this effect are but the offspring of its own peculiar inductions; that absurdity and inconsistency characterize every step, the whole ending in confusion, — it follows that immortality is a truthful problem; for whatever is not of error is of the opposite. Since what soever abides the keen scrutiny of analysis, and the test of harmoniously-wrought principles, justly commends itself to the consideration and reception of every candid mind, so this theorem, sustaining an admirable consistency in all its parts, and culminating in a beautiful and grand result, must rationally take sides with truth; and God, the great Geometrician of the universe, has seemed to place it there.

In the great book of nature and of providence, of which God is the Author, there are problems which we, with the utmost power of expansion allowed by earthly cultivation, cannot solve; but this fact only strengthens the belief in a future life, for the veil of mystery would receive additional thickness to suppose he presents them to us merely that we may waste ourselves in vain efforts to comprehend them. Waste, apparently, is no part of God's plan. He has no delight in it.

In both of these books there are not only manifest problems of difficult solution, but there are *sealed leaves*. No art of alchemy, no mortal power, can loosen them. They have always remained inscrutable by man, and always will, if he is confined to this world, unless a new administration takes the place of the present; and not being able to conceive a better one than now exists, we might as well deal with its mysteries as undertake to surround ourselves with those more intricate

still. Are none ever to know what is hidden there — whether it relate to the plans of God, to the interests of man, or neither? But why be so curious? some may ask. But is not curiosity a divinely-implanted principle, and can it be for mere tantalization? Turn whichever way we will, we find no satisfactory basis upon which to rest, until we come to a time when these leaves will be unsealed, and the secret things shall be brought to light; and as this comes not within the range of man's present observation, is there any alternative but to conclude it will come in the future? Admitting this, we have a key to a thousand examples that would otherwise appear meaningless and worthless — a clew to unravel the mystic threads woven into the divine economy. How it dispenses light, diffuses joy, and permeates everything with blessing! If it be not true, who would not hug so delightful an illusion, and clasping it to his breast, like Cicero, be "pleased with the mistake," since the good it brings, and the cheering hope, so far outweigh anything on the other side?

"In opposition to the desponding reflections and gloomy views of the sceptic, it inspires the virtuous mind with a lively hope, and throws a glorious radiance over the scenes of creation, and over every part of the government of the Almighty. It exhibits the Self-existent and Eternal Mind as an object of ineffable sublimity, grandeur, and loveliness, invested with unerring wisdom, impartial justice, and boundless benevolence, presiding over an endless train of intelligent minds formed after his image, governing them with just and equitable laws, controlling all things by an almighty and unerring hand, and rendering all his dispensations ultimately conducive to the happiness of the moral universe. It presents before us an unbounded scene, in which we may hope to contemplate the scheme of Providence in all its objects and bearings; where the glories of the divine perfections will be illustriously displayed; where the powers of the human mind will be perpetually expanding, and new objects of sublimity and beauty incessantly

rising to the view, in boundless perspective, world without end. It dispels the clouds that hang over the present and future destiny of man, and fully accounts for those longing looks into futurity which accompany us at every turn, and those capacious powers of intellect which cannot be fully exerted in the present life. It presents the most powerful motives to a life of virtue, to the performance of beneficent and heroic actions, to the prosecution of substantial science, and to the diffusion of useful knowledge among all ranks of mankind. It affords the strongest consolation and support amidst the trials of life, and explains the reasons of those sufferings to which we are here exposed, as being incentives to the exercise of virtue, and as working 'for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' It affords us ground to hope that the veil which now intercepts our view of the distant regions of creation will be withdrawn, and that the amazing structure of the universe, in all its sublime proportions and beautiful arrangements, will be more clearly unfolded to our view. It dispels the terrors which naturally surround the messenger of death, and throws a radiance over the mansions of the tomb. It cheers the gloomy vale of death, and transforms it into a passage which leads to a world of perfection and happiness, where moral evil shall be forever abolished, where intellectual light shall beam with effulgence on the enraptured spirit, and where celestial virtue, now so frequently persecuted and contemned, shall be enthroned in undisturbed and eternal empire."

Were it that all this would prove a failure in the end, yet a life with such anticipation would be better than to be wholly without it; but when reason opens a fair prospect that the reality is attainable, — that it may be given — an actual possession, the title sure, and the inheritance all it is said to be, — it becomes all mankind eagerly to seek and cherish it.

"It is not a true story," said a matron to a child who was reading with delight the fascinating tale of romance. There was disappointment in the look of that young face, and sad-

ness in her tone, as she said, "Don't tell me of it, for I wish to believe it." There was something there for our graver subject; for, if so fair a thing as immortality be not true, say it not; and if it be found an actual truth, a veritable story, dwell upon it, learn it, exult in and admire it continually and forever.

We would not make mystery more mysterious by rejecting it, or be guilty of such daring impiety as to assert, or even suppose, that, in all the multiform operations of earth, and all the discipline of life, the Creator had no serious end.

Better to think that

"Life, though transient as the hour,
Is yet the seed of an immortal flower."

CHAPTER IX.

ELEMENTS OF PRESENT HAPPINESS A WARRANT FOR THEIR CONTINUANCE.

Analysis of present Life the only Basis without Revelation. — Nature as a Guide. — Abundant Provision for Happiness. — Organs of Sense. — Social Joy. — The mourning Exile. — Sympathy. — Imagination. — Genius. — Restoration of Order. — Truth gilding the gloomy Picture.

“Pause for a while, ye travellers of earth, to contemplate the universe in which you dwell, and the glory of Him who created it; to consider illimitable being, and to see in virtue the essence and the element of the world ye are to inherit.” — *Anon.*

WE have indirectly considered, in preceding chapters, the goodness and benevolence of God displayed in his works; the distinctive peculiarities of his providential government, with its manifest regard for the happiness of his subjects, as indicating a continuance of life beyond the dissolution of the body. Are there shadows without substance? Oftentimes, in approaching truth, especially when we meet it in the dim and darkened aisles of nature, it appears a shadowy form with no distinct outline, and not until we and it emerge into more light does it assume its shape and beautiful proportion. We purposely tarry a little longer in the shade for a more particular analysis of what surrounds us, that we may discover, if possible, new elements, or a latent power in those already seen to exist, that is not yet fully appreciated.

Independently of revelation, we can have no idea of another life but by an analysis of this; no conception of the characteristics of that life but such as is gained by the experiences of this present state. The measure of happiness is gauged according

to the standard of earth, a fulness, perhaps, being given unto it above that which is ordinary, inasmuch as the soul is formed so as constantly to desire and hope for a higher degree of perfection in all things. It naturally has an ideal of something higher and better; so that the untutored Indian, in his wildest state, ruminates of the good time coming, when the chase will be better rewarded; when nobler forests will be allowed him in which to range, and better opportunities be granted for the gratification of his desires. His life on earth is purely sensual, and all his conceptions of another are but as the antitype of this — elevated, indeed, but of the same character. So, too, with the most cultivated and refined of pupils in the school of nature — their views are altogether modified by the peculiarity of their own interest and experience. They have but one stand-point, and all their observations are made there; all their actions controlled by knowledge gained from thence. Nature, indeed, is a teacher of varied acquisitions. Long since she met God's approval. She has his certificate, and in her sphere of service she has always done her work wisely and well; but what we say of her lessons of immortality is, that she teaches it by hints. If we would know of God, she telleth us more. But, as every creator reveals himself in his creations by a logical necessity, we are led to conclude that a powerful, wise, and benevolent Being presides over the universe. Nature, then, is a transcript of the Divine Original, and, as far as she goes, imparts true knowledge; but when we push inquiry, and ask of man,

“ Why formed at all? and wherefore as he is?
 Has he within him an immortal seed?
 Or does the tomb take all? If he survive
 His ashes, where? and in what weal or woe?”

then she points to certain phenomena, bids us observe certain indications, which suggest a course of action and life, and says, Possibly it may be so, probably it will.

Nor is she faithless to her trust that she refuses more. She

has dark places of her own, and a key to unlock them ; but there are things beyond her reach — “ knots worthy of solution,” but such as Deity alone can solve.

Valuing her teachings and influence, however, we say unto her now, “ Whither thou goest, I will go ;” and when we arrive at a boundary beyond which she cannot go, we will find another guide to conduct us on our way, and show us other scenes, and explain other sights. We have found pleasure in following her thus far, and confirmation of the truth we seek to establish ; but we retain the connection only so far as the present chapter leads us, keeping it for the more particular consideration of the elements which form the composition we call happiness, which seem to have in them the principle of perpetuity, and tell of endless combinations in an endless state. When we say man desires happiness, we utter that which is perfectly obvious. Every one knows it, every one feels it. When we couple with this God's care and regard for the gratification of this universal wish, we are led into a larger field, wherein are rich suggestions, paths pointing to immortality ; for, as we have said before, such careful, loving design will not, in all probability, spend itself upon a momentary work. These demonstrations are strong presumptive proof that God will continue to care for his grateful subjects through a period equal to the duration of his own infinite nature. If love is an evident quality of that nature, will it not forever remain so, of necessity prompting to one continual round of beneficent action eternally ?

So plainly is the existence of this attribute written upon everything, we cannot question it. Is not, then, one of two suppositions manifestly true — either that the race is eternal upon the earth, thus furnishing scope for the full exercise of this attribute, or that there is an eternity for man, in contradistinction from time ? If we should now and then, while here, witness a cessation of God's favors, a withdrawal of his watch and care, the inconstancy of his operations might give us ground to think that the time would come when they would cease altogether, in which case we must confess

danger, not only to immortality, but even mortality. Should love cease to be an attribute of the divine nature, woe unto us in this life, to say nothing of the life to come. But, under all the provocations of men, it never has failed, and therefore we think it steadfast. Since the time the sun was placed in the heavens, it has daily poured its life-giving beams upon the world. Day and night, labor and rest, have alternated to meet the necessities and well-being of man. The seasons have come and gone in regular succession, each bringing appropriate gifts to gladden human life. The clouds have scattered their treasures to enrich the domains of the lords of earth; and not only this, with utility is combined much of beauty. The material world, as the work of God, would, or ought to be, interesting to us were all its blessings brief, were there no elements beyond immediate adaptation to pressing physical want. "How much more interesting, then, if, upon examination, we discover these more gross and palpable contributions to our common and most pressing wants to be but as the bread and meat bestowed on starved bodies, in comparison with countless and boundless expressions of the tenderest sensibly lavished upon intelligent, appreciating souls!"

We might have existed in a world without any ornament, been formed so as to take no delight in pleasant sights, agreeable sounds, or sweet odors; but that it would be altogether a lower order of existence we are ready to admit. It would be merely animal, requiring far different aliment for its growth, and very different treatment from the loftier plant of celestial origin we are conscious of possessing.

Five senses, with acute perceptions, are given unto us, as so many ministers of pleasure; and to which of these are we ready, at any time, to say, "Go thy way; I have no need of thee." Deprived of one, we mourn over it as a sad deprivation, as a closing up of a very important avenue, a channel through which happiness had been wont to come. How varied the joy that comes through the medium of sight! Take it in one direction, and that in a description of a modern writer, who drank at the fount of Nature, bubbling in the wilderness.

"I gaze with admiration on the trees, the beautiful trees, which I find in great numbers, and of many kinds. For the time I am absorbed in them. Flowers are emblems; beautiful emblems, indeed, of all beautiful thoughts and things. The trees take higher ground; they are not types; they aspire to a loftier admiration; they have a personality of their own. They raise their heads, and stretch their giant arms to the heavens. The flowers brook confinement; a little pot of earth and a greenhouse meet their wants. They are ephemeral, and claim no peculiar affinity with hills, and dells, and rocks, nor yet with light, shade, and clouds. The trees stand forth to view as a visible and indispensable part of the great whole. And how curious it is to observe the graceful creatures varying and changing their garb, not only with the season, but with the hours of the day, and always in exquisite harmony with all about them! There are their morning and evening shadows, shortening or lengthening to the view; their dense shade under the meridian sun, and their gauze and lace-work of every texture displayed against the sky at evening. Upon the hills they present one appearance, in the dells and vales another. Sometimes they present a barrier to the view, beyond which all is doubtful or unknown, huge genii keeping the portals of knowledge, screening from superficial observers the solemn mysteries of the future and the profound. Again, their spreading branches indulge us with glimpses of the sky, or of the distant fields and hills. Stroll upon the plain, and you find every various form portrayed, and even minutest sprigs and tiny leaves pencilled in perfect relief against the deep-blue sky. Mount the hills, and these same trees are seen nestling down in soft repose among the beautiful evening clouds, or the purple and rosy haze. Reclining in the grateful shade of sympathetic trees, philosophers have sought out fundamental principles, poets have breathed tenderest inspirations, Christians have prayed fervently and poured out boundless praise to God. Through the perforated canopies many a new-born soul has gazed with ecstasy upon the starry

glories of a new-found God, swelling with an unutterable sympathy with the great Creator of the universe which he has striven in vain to understand. It is an earnest of the future, higher, heavenly state." The latter idea, however, is not exactly what we are endeavoring to sustain at present, though not at variance with it. We simply say that those things which minister so abundantly to this one sense, are but elements in the cup of happiness which God has prepared, and presents so freely to his creatures. This "beauty is something superadded" to existence, says Bower, "for no other conceivable purpose than that of imparting pleasure." What is true of sight is true, also, of all the other senses. Throughout there is a design beyond mere existence. There is a wide diffusion of joy; and will *love* put a sudden and violent end to all this?

After special preparation, and special delight in imparting, will life be taken away, and there come the cessation of all these joys, and all capacity to enjoy?

But what is it that enjoys? Because the eye looks out upon delightful objects, it is not this that is made happy; because harmonious sounds are heard, it is not the ear that exults in the exquisite pleasure; nor is it that the organ of smell itself rejoices because regaled by the many fragrant things about it. These senses convey impressions to an appreciating spirit, and from this source come the manifestations of delight we witness in others, or experience in ourselves.

That the latter is not dependent upon the senses is evident from the fact already noticed, that, as one by one they fail, the sensibilities of the soul are not diminished, but rather increased, and made more keenly alive to the impressions it does receive. We see death, too, stilling these operations altogether. Pleasing sights and sounds, and delicious fragrance, may all exist as before, but the senses that were wont to take them up and carry them within are all unconscious. The subject of their ministrations still lives, however, with its yearnings for happiness; and because of it we infer that it will be ministered unto in.

some other way. Spirit is God's, and remaineth at his disposal, as well as the methods of ministration he may choose to adopt.

The nice arrangement of the organs of sensation is an unspeakably joyous element in this life; but God is abundantly able to make the soul happy independently of all these, and the exhibitions of care during this brief period of existence seem to say there are greater things in reserve; that things here are but imperfect shadows of what shall yet appear.

Herein is manifest "both an appeal of exquisite tenderness to man's present susceptibility, and a foreshadowing of future presentations to a susceptibility which, by each day's experience, is being, and will be, immeasurably enlarged."

Another most unequivocal indication of God's regard for the happiness of his creatures, is the distribution of the kindly and social affections, those things "which stand foremost among our primary impulses, and which are prompt to act before reason can come into play, or the voice of conscience be heard, standing as ever-watchful sentinels to increase the joys and lessen the sorrows of our mortal lot."

What a beautiful aspect is this in our world — the source of wide-spread happiness and occasion of elevated and untold joy! Mankind are thus made, as it were, the guardians of each other. Merged into one brotherhood by the common link of humanity, if a chord of joy or sorrow be touched in one, it finds a response in many others, though oceans separate, and voices are unknown. A few years since a sound of woe came over the waters, from a people whom famine had visited. They were rapidly falling before the dread destroyer, and in their agony they cried, "Send us bread, or we die." As the appeal was sounded upon our shores, sympathy, like an electric thrill, ran through the hearts of the people. There was no kindred blood in their veins to be quickened by the call, no peculiar claim to interest or charity, but simply that feeling which allies man to his brother man through all God's world.

It was this which sent back vessels freighted with generous and substantial proofs of their common regard, by which a people were enabled to go bravely on, notwithstanding the determined march of the spectral foe. Thus these God-implemented powers and principles make this earth a scene in which we delight to be actors. These are redeeming features in our fallen world, connecting links to bind us unto it, and yet these would make us more than willing to leave it, provided the soul can find assurance that they will be perpetuated in another world, and in a higher degree of perfection. If that which is capable of yielding so much happiness in an imperfect state may have the scope and development of a perfect state, how delightfully captivating to imagination does the prospect appear!

The more perfect and extensive the plans of action, carried on by united and harmonious efforts of men whose measures are concerted solely for the common benefit of mankind, so much higher is the place we award them in the scale of being, so much greater their attainment in loftiest virtue, and their exemplification of godlike principles and spirit.

The universal and involuntary tribute rendered to such is, "Well done." A thousand tender beatings form the pulsations of the great heart of humanity, which, like living strokes, move the complex machinery of the great system — the brotherhood of man; and if it work for the well-being and happiness of men here, then infinitely more so under more favorable circumstances — such as might be afforded by being taken where the immediate superintendence of the original and skilful Contriver would be constantly enjoyed, and where ease and beauty would supersede the loss and distressing frictions we know so much about now. But, to leave this general care for the general good, and come to particulars, we find God setting "the solitary in families," and by this beneficent arrangement developing a still more genial side to nature, in providing for the exercise of the finer sensibilities which he has planted so richly in the

soil of the heart. As the dewdrops of love fall there, and the copious showers of affection descend, what fairer sight appears in all God's field? Poets have tasked themselves to the utmost for beautiful imagery, that they might show forth its loveliness to the world; but it refuses to be embodied in words, or to be confined by the forms of human art. All language is tame to him who realizes in his own happy experience the singular strength, vigor, and gladness it gives to the spirit.

O love! as it flows through an unbroken family circle, how like to a fathomless ocean — a boundless, shoreless thing; but what answers to an adequate portrayal?

The sighs and murmurings of ocean start no tears of anguish. If, indeed, we speak poetically of "weeping briny tears," it is from unconscious eyes, and their fall wrings out no bitter answering drop in return. The great waves flow ceaselessly against an insensible, rocky shore, and no solicitude is stirred, for it is an inanimate thing. The stars and silvery gems, that nestle and sparkle on its placid bosom, kindle a transient glow; but how unlike all to the hopes, the fears, and tears, the strange comminglings, that fill and thrill one loving human soul for the dear objects of its affection! Every sigh, though it be but half breathed, is speedily met by that which answereth unto it. What careful protection, what gentle shieldings against the chilling breezes and threatening waves, although they be seen but in anticipation. Every tear excites pity, every woe stirs the fountains of commiseration, while over the birth of every new-born joy is general rejoicing, as that which heralds a new store of comfort.

Sayest thou, O reader, that this is an imperfect element, because of its wretched care and anxiety — the uncertainty and disappointments which sometimes attend it? We know that the keenest love has the keenest anxieties, and yet it is the most perfect thing that blesses us on earth. Remove it, and every tie that binds us to life is sundered, every charm is dissolved, and every hope is dead. Like the dreary waste around the

base of the fierce volcano, which allows no living thing, so would the heart be if without love; so would life be if without the refreshing streams that flow from this fountain.

The objects of our love do indeed fade away. We lose them from our range of vision altogether; we turn here and there, on every side, to find something that shall compensate for the loss, and we find it not. Love has been wounded, and there is no balm that can heal it — the arrow went so deep, balsam cannot reach the place; but, because of these things, for the reason that love dies not with the disappearance of the loved, but reaches on into the future, always following the absent with the tenderest vigils of memory and affection, we infer there is something there to take hold of, the earnest of which we receive here.

"If this winged and swift life be all our life," says Professor Wilson, "what a mournful taste have we had of a possible happiness! We have, as it were, from some cold and dark edge of a bright world, just looked in and been plucked away again! Have we come to experience pleasure by fits and glimpses, but intertwined with pain, burdensome labor, weariness, and indifference? Have we come to try the solace and joy of a warm, fearless, and confiding affection, to be then chilled or blighted by bitterness, by separation, by change of heart, or by the dread sunderer of loves — Death? Have we felt in a fortunate hour the charm of the beautiful, that invests as with a mantle the visible creation, or have we found ourselves lifted above the earth by sudden apprehensions of sublimity, — have we had the consciousness of all these feelings, which seemed to us as if they might themselves make up a life, — almost an angel's life, — and were they 'instant come and instant gone'? Have all these things been but flowers that we have pulled by the side of a hard and tedious way, and that, after gladdening us for a brief season with hue and color, wither in our hands, and are like ourselves — nothing?"

When we look at the beauty and strength of this God-given principle, love, — when we see the extent, variety, and peculiar

character of the happiness it brings, — we are led to exclaim, Verily, it hath the elements of perpetuity within itself; it shall not, cannot die.

With a certain class of writers raptures are always incident to love — and why? Because the highest conceptions of bliss are found here. They are fed at the board she spreads, they find peculiar nourishment in the aliment she provides; yet it is not so much these ecstasies, but the calm, healthful flow, which, like the grateful stream, causes flowers to spring all along the borders of humanity, and little emerald patches to shine forth here and there — happy homes; it is this which sends such blessing round the world, and fills it with gladness. It is this which constitutes the chief feature of earthly good, and makes us ardently desire that a good God will provide for its continuance when he takes us from present scenes.

We might speak of another combination of friendship, and all the delightful associations connected with it — that principle which generates stronger feeling than the all-embracing one of which we first spoke — and not so strong as the all-absorbing one we last mentioned, but nevertheless a beautiful element in human society, as those will testify who are the happy recipients of its favors. But we pass these examples.

Some idea of its worth, and of the value of all these things, is seen in the musings of the illustrious exile on his lonely isle, who gives vent to his feeling in such despairing tones as to touch our hearts: —

*“ Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,
O, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again!
O, tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.”*

If so much care is manifest in the completion of the social being, what shall we say of the provisions made for the intellectual nature? The superiority of man over all other orders of creation is seen in his intelligence. There is a sort of gregari-

ous instinct among animals that answers somewhat to the social feeling ; but when we come to a higher plane, — that of thought, — and speak of a living, reasoning, active principle, which prompts, guides, explores, and searches, then we find man alone, above all other creatures God has made, more like the Creator.

The constitution of the human soul is a wonder of organism, each part so arranged as to secure the harmonious coöperation of the others, while all are made to promote man's happiness and advantage. Look at the perceptive faculty. What a world of enjoyment it opens, and how varied the attractions of that world ! All the beautiful sights and sounds in Nature would be comparatively tame and meaningless without the aid of this faculty to bring out their secret forces and beauties, and show why and to what end they exist, and what new purposes they may be made to subserve.

Perhaps none would tell us in more glowing terms of the unspeakable delight derived from this source than Sir Isaac Newton ; or perhaps he might find language too poor, and silently, yet eloquently, point to that moment of concentrated pleasure when Heaven sent him an apple as he sat under the shade of a fruitful tree, and he thought of affinities and relations until that discovery of Nature's laws which will remain a blessing to science through all time. The slight, yet richly-laden breeze that fanned his brow at that time took up the words, *Triumphal achievement !* and carried them round the world, thus bringing to the thinking philosopher what one has been pleased to call "additional immortality" — the perpetuation of his name and memory among men. Something of this intense delight was realized also by him who started from his reverie, and with wildly-beaming eye repeated again and again, "I have found it — I have found it !" A multitude of instances might be adduced — the records of enthusiastic men, who have found the chief joy of their lives in this direction. But it may be said, these are the few in possession of more than ordinary gifts, with

powers of perception rarely equalled, and consequently with greater capacity for achievement and enjoyment.

But this is no insignificant item in the happiness of *all* men. It is a pleasure diffused over the whole plain of human existence, and because some experience greater intensity of thought and action, it argues not that all those who come not up to the same standard are unhappy.

"When we say that any creature is as happy as it is capable of being, we express its perfect enjoyment; the lowness of the capacity does not lessen this perfection;" therefore the perceptive faculty is a universal blessing, yielding its myriad revelations to cheer and elevate the world.

But further, man has reflective powers. "We not only perceive an object, but also, by reflection, glance from the object to its cause and design, its conformity or want of conformity to its design, its relation to other objects of its own and of other classes. We compare, contrast, and combine objects; we gauge and measure the movements of our own souls; we estimate our own worth, or want of it; we lay a foundation of all improvement in a well-ascertained knowledge of the need of improvement, and of its possibility. It gives a real and immeasurable value to ideas, by stamping them with the characteristic of permanency, — for, once admitted, ideas are ours in perpetuity. Of no other property are we so completely the possessors; even we ourselves can never completely alienate them."

These powers stand as so many artificers to prepare and embellish material wherewith to complete the structure of happiness. Their sphere is wide indeed — boundless — neither confined to any one period of time, past, present, or future, but embracing and ranging over all. Scanning the past, it brings recollection; and who does not know happy hours that have been glorified by delightful memories — seasons that have been made peculiarly joyous by nothing save sweet remembrances? To this blessed ministry are we indebted for those

hours of visitation, when the forms of the departed stand before us, a living presence, as it were, when we almost see their smiles and feel their warm breath upon us.

We have clasped the loved image that was brought to our side at such times, and essayed to follow it, and, with recollection for our guide, we have been able to do so through weeks, months, and even years. Ah, hallowed guide! we revere thy power, and acknowledge the goodness that thus provided for us! Some act, word, or scene is treasured and afterward recalled, just in season, it may be, to strengthen a good purpose, or develop an embryo resolution, which shall tell in an important sense on character, perhaps affect, or even decide, one's destiny for life. But, without attempting further recapitulation here, we pass to the realm of anticipation, into which we are ushered when thought employs itself on the future. How many blissful seasons are ours before the days come which fold the occasions within their own arms! So often has observation taken note of this, it has been affirmed that by far the greater portion of the enjoyment of life is in anticipation; that the fairest things are those we persuade ourselves are coming. If the present be dark, we comfort ourselves with the thought that the future will be brighter; and here we are met by Hope, another element that God has given to lighten the burdens of earth and sweeten the draught prepared for human lips. If present good take to itself wings and fly away, Hope cheerfully suggests that something will yet appear which will more than compensate for all that is gone: if pain be added to distress, and sorrow to both, she promises days of happy exemption from all; if disappointment come, and clouds foretell a tempest of grief, she gives the sweet assurance that the retiring storm shall bring the smiling sun and shining bow—welcome pledges of a serene sky.

It is a wonderful gift, one of the most powerful principles of the human mind. We find it at work everywhere. "It is the grand support of all mankind in tribulation—the main-

spring of action throughout the earth. It is inscribed on the prison door, on the merchant's vessel, on the warrior's banner, on the pilgrim's staff, and on the pillow of the dying. It animates the lawyer at the bar, the preacher in the pulpit, the parent at the head of his family, and the starving poor while passing through the dreary winter. We plough in hope, we sow in hope, we reap in hope; we live in hope, and we die in hope." It beams for the proudest, and cheers the humblest. Without it palaces are as dungeons; with it, the lowliest cottage becomes a palace of happiness, of more than princely wealth and joy.

Surely, then, Hope is an element of happiness, contributing almost enough of itself to assuage the sorrows of earth; for, when woe and misery threaten, her soothing anodyne is always ready.

But, further, man is an imaginative being. God might have made us prosaic, might have clipped the wings of fancy, or rather given none at all, and kept us down among the actualities, the stern, cold, and commonplace things of a cheerless, narrow, and monotonous existence. There are some people we are wont to call prosy, matter-of-fact persons; and why? Because they are destitute of fine conceptions, and are wanting in an appreciation of beautiful images—that discrimination which makes one happier and better, as it has no inconsiderable influence in the development of the higher nature. Seemingly the divine end in the endowment of the soul with the imaginative faculty was simply its elevation and happiness. It is chiefly engaged in the creation of new things, bringing new combinations to excite fresh interest and wonder with unceasing industry. It keeps, as it were, a patent-office, where every imaginable variety appears in every possible department, made attractive by numberless forms of beauty, by countless models of exquisite finish, all of which are fruitful in suggestions of ease and comfort, or utility and more essential good.

But how shall we analyze this thing which has power to

roam the earth and pierce the heavens — one moment ranging among the scenes of this sublunary sphere, the next knocking at mysterious abodes in an infinitely distant realm? It is indeed wonderful! Of what bright creations is it the author! When a guide to intellect, we are presented with an array of fables, parables, figures, and metaphors, the redolence of which well nigh intoxicates the mind by its very excess. The brilliant display fascinates and charms, and when the beauty of their hidden meaning begins to manifest itself, the eye sparkles, the countenance lights up with joy, and the whole soul rejoices. Such is its power in only one direction.

"The Creator has filled the material world with analogies which make an irresistible appeal to the attentive observer; every material object having the power to suggest ideas incalculably more important than anything belonging to itself."

Imagination, then, has the uncounted nurses of Nature at her command. Fed and nourished thus, she is a dainty, sprightly thing, flying to execute her commission, be it what it may, never refusing loftiest flight or boldest venture. The audacity of man may have pushed it too far at times, but God intended this faculty for happiness, and because some have misused the gift, it argues nothing against the intent or the power of the faculty to answer its end. Remove it, and from the mental horoscope is expunged one of its brightest stars; that portion of our pathway which had been illuminated by these gentle beams would be forever dark. The eye would perceive no beauty there; the ear would fail to discover those musical cantos of delightful expression it had been wont to hear, and the dormant heart testify to the reality of the fearful blank. Where, then, would be the poetry of life? Ah, happy knowledge! that we are not left to the miserable echo of the question. Poetry, in its divinest sense, is ours. God has written it on every page of the book of nature, and given it to us to learn, bidding us allow its inspiration into our souls, as that which will enlarge and enrich them.

"Poetry," says one, "when doing its highest office, is nothing more than an attempt to make the things that are seen the prints of the things invisible. Imagination then becomes a prophet, by making Nature, with all her treasure-house of imagery, the analogue of what shall be hereafter; or — for it comes to the same thing — of what is already in the human soul, waiting for its expression and symbolization."

Another source of happiness is genius — "ambition's boasted wing" — spoken of as a "natural penetration, which enables its possessor to discern more than the superficial aspects and obvious relations of facts, conjoined with a natural energy, aptitude, and versatility of power, which enable their possessor to evoke his perceptions from their recondite existence, to embody them, and give them to the contemplation and comprehension of the world."

Separate from imagination, it does its own work, and adds its own store of blessing; for whatever enlarges the range of thought, of vision, and appreciation, — whatever increases ability and extends power, — is, or should be, an unspeakably joyous element in human society. It has its admirers, its worshippers, and rich possessors. Happy those who are ministered unto by it, as well as those who minister. Indeed, it has been said that one of God's "best gifts" to man is the power to communicate, the ability to impart, of his blessing unto others — that here he is most like his Divine Parent, whose infinite nature finds supreme delight in continual giving. That the most benevolent man is the happiest is the universal testimony of consciousness and observation; not simply that benevolence which lavishes an abundance of coin indiscriminately, but that genial kindness that metes out the measure of sympathy and encouragement often more coveted, giving just that which is needed, though it be at a sacrifice.

We may have "thoughts, conceptions, theories, schemes, and plans, beautiful, rational, promising, and even exhilarating;" yet if we have no power to embody them in action, we essentially fail in the whole work of life

It is only when our precepts are fortified by example that they have weight. It is only when we follow the unselfish promptings of our God-appointed monitor, and go on imparting as God hath given us ability, that we know the full blessedness of communicating. As the Lord Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Voices come from the low haunts of infamy and crime, from those engaged in a work of rescue, to the same effect. "All is forbidding," says one, "often revolting; but O the blessedness of saving men, of exalting souls! Life shall be a willing sacrifice in the blessed work."

Everything invites to the exercise of this gift. The scale runs "from the casual ministration to the commonest of merely physical wants, up to the deliberate consecration of one's whole soul to the redemption of every soul on earth from every ill that flesh is heir to." As God delights in imparting, so he has made it a source of peculiar satisfaction to his creatures; and those who are the most active in this direction come nearest to the divine standard, and experience fuller and richer manifestations of the divine favor.

Once more: man is so formed as to be an adoring and reverential being; to be moved with admiration by superior excellence even in his fellow-men; much more to be stirred with awe in view of the unequalled sublimity of Jehovah's character.

We consider him as sadly deficient, as unworthy, who shows nothing but indifference to superior virtue and goodness; as dead to all true and noble feeling; callous to every worthy principle; altogether below the ordinary standard imposed by human judgment. It is a departure from the rule which God gave to all men at the beginning, and therefore false. In proportion to the appreciation of excellence is the approximation to the uncreated source of it.

"Virtue alone is happiness below." It exalts man to fellowship with his Maker, and brings him into sympathy with the

Infinite. What shall we say, then, of these rich endowments of our nature? Are they not immortal? Are they not so many earnest and foretastes of another and better state — another and higher life? Do not these powers, manifestly capable of immense accession, seem to furnish warrant for their continuance beyond the grave? Will not these things — sources of happiness here, — be richer in joy when free from the limitations and contractions of earth and sense?

When we look at the attractive combination formed by the union of all these elements; at the abundant provision made for the social, moral, and intellectual nature of man, we are forced to ask the question, "Has God hung down these pictures from his throne as the most perfect imprints of the good and the fair, and not rather as dim shadowings of what may be, as helps to our faith, and stairs to our thoughts, climbing toward realms of a more refulgent summer, or a more enduring spring?" Surely affections that are planted so deep in the soul, sympathy so all-pervading, perception so keen, reflection so penetrating, recollection so pleasing, hope so bright, imagination so wide in its range, and adoration so appreciative, — surely these were not given to wither like flowers by the chill hand of death.

Their exercise here forecasts the ineffable felicity which would result from perfect development in a perfect sphere. God, it seems, would never lavish such wealth of nature upon the creature of a day, would never awaken such hopes and kindle such aspirations, — hopes and aspirations that reach out after eternity for satisfaction, — unless he had provided for their continued exercise and support.

So far from even supposing their destruction, it is more natural, more reasonable and consistent, to conclude that greater perfection awaits them — that a more entire union of all these elements will yet appear in the future, insuring not only the perpetuation of what we call our richest joys now, but an infinite accession to them all.

Union and perfect harmony give great facility of action in all cases that fall under our observation; but who shall measure the felicity if these elements of which we have spoken arise to newness of power and action in a faultless sphere? When they shall flourish in the clear air of the celestial regions, then, and then only, shall we realize our loftiest ideals. Nature, in her sublimest aspects, does not give us what we desire. If there be nothing better, then we must go into the chamber of our souls, and write upon its walls the despairing sentence, *Only a mockery!* — say to our hopes, *Ye are phantoms*, — to our yearnings, *I know not whence ye are*, — to our anticipations, *Ye are hopeless illusions*.

Tell Genius to clip her wings, and Fancy to stay her flight; bid Reason veil her eye, and Excellence withhold her allurements; for there is nothing in all this but what shall soon cease to be. But stay; thou art not condemned to this gloomy work! Come forth from the dismal retirement, erase the sentence if thou hast written it, for a "voice comes from afar," telling of a surer light, and we turn to meet it; or if choice bid thee remain, raise the curtain of the darkened windows, and let the glorious sunlight in, and thou shalt read clear-written lines, that have hitherto been invisible; thou shalt discover beauty where before were distorted shadows, and order where only chaos reigned; yea, more, shalt find

" God diffused through every part,
God himself triumphant in the heart."

CHAPTER X.

GLORY AND CERTAINTY BEAM FROM REVELATION.

The sure Guide. — Revelation a Sun. — Harmony between Nature and Revelation. — Bible not dealing in direct Assertions. — Patriarchs influenced by the Belief of endless Life. — Prophetical Writings. — Christ. — The Apostles. — Vision of John.

“ 'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,
Explains all mysteries, except her own,
And so illuminates the path of life,
That fools discover it, and stray no more.” — *Cowper*.

THUS far we have been guided by Reason and Nature, and have only arrived at the point of man's probable immortality. Both conscious and unconscious nature have indeed suggested it; the loves, hopes, desires, and aspirations of the one, and the rocks, groves, streams, and harmonies of the other, have all had voices to lift up in support of it; but nowhere have we reached absolute certainty; at no time has it appealed to the understanding with the force of an actual demonstration. We have had evidence; but the basis on which it rested was not so solid as we could wish.

We have had strong presumptive proof; but who is satisfied with presumption, especially in the most important of all questions, final destiny?

We have asked of Reason, “ Shall man live again?” and it has said, “ It seems a logical deduction from the fact that men have universally desired and believed that it might be so. Men desire to be perfect, and to enjoy greater facilities for the acquisition of knowledge; therefore it seems reasonable to suppose there will be ample scope for this desire; and since, up

to the last moment of earthly life, this remains in all its intensity, the conviction is strong, that an opportunity yet remains on the other side of time, a forecast of which is allowed here."

We have observed man—the keenness of his moral perceptions, his foreboding of retribution, the inequalities of his condition, and seen in these things the shadows of things to come.

We have inquired of Nature whereto life tendeth, and she tells us she knows no such thing as annihilation; that such inexplicable mysteries attend it, it is wiser to reject it, though even the cause for rejection cannot be explained.

The peculiar elements of earthly happiness have also inclined us unto the belief that He who hath shown such special regard for the wants of mankind, in furnishing their terrestrial home, will also provide for their future necessities in an equally careful manner—yea, more, since that which survives earth and time is of infinitely greater consequence.

Every step has given us additional confirmation, has strengthened our belief in the probability of a future life; but when we would know of a surety, and seek the requisite proof, we find, perchance, an echo, possibly a whisper, and, it may be, nothing but silence. The soul wearies with the unsatisfying round, and would fain emerge into a clearer light—a light that will give "form and comeliness" to many objects upon which it has long looked, but which have never assumed definite proportions by reason of the darkness. The hour has come. We leave the long aisles of Nature—her dim galleries; and have done with echoes and whispers. We shall use the twilight and lamplight of intellect, only so far as the faint or flickering rays may serve to increase the intensity of that radiance which shines so brightly on our future way; we grope no longer among tottering ruins and broken arches, for the storm and time-defying pyramids are as sands, compared with the everlasting structure that rises in eternal beauty and grandeur about us now; we cease from being anxious wanderers on an uncertain

shore, for tidings come of a good harbor and a blessed country, and our fears are hushed and our troubles calmed. Revelation, like a star, has appeared in the horizon — like a star — nay, rather, as a sun, to flood the earth with glory, and to bathe the world, as it were, in a sea of liquid light. We hail it as a harbinger of good to the souls of men, and look to it with eager expectation for that which every other source hath denied us.

It comes as the dawning of a new era, the beginning of a new life, for plans and purposes are invested with new meaning; the plants and flowers of existence — its duties and hopes — strike their roots deeper, and send their shoots higher under the influence, while the whole moral and spiritual realm shows wonderful freshness and vigor, and yet not what it shall be when it is subjected to broader action, and becomes more thoroughly and perfectly receptive. What the refreshing shower is to the parched and thirsty earth in a time of drought such is revelation to the soul that feels the burning fever engendered by the miasmatic air to which it has been subject in some parts of nature.

The lonely and benighted traveller forgets the fatigue and anxiety of a perilous journey, and feels fresh courage as he hears the sound of a human voice, or sees the curling smoke that tells him he is near the habitation of men. The mariner remembers not the dangers that threatened him and his tempest-tossed bark when the wide expanse about him is securely calm; but traveller by sea or land, however great the danger, or wonderful the deliverance, never knew so great a joy, or experienced so perfect security, as he who long and vainly sought for the priceless boon of immortality in nature, and suddenly found it in revelation. We say nothing of the authority on which this word of revealed truth rests. It is all-sufficient for us. Were it not, we yet might say with another, "I will abide the precepts, admire the beauty, revere the mysteries, and, as far as in me lies, practise the mandates, of this sacred

volume; and should the ridicule of earth and the blasphemy of hell assail me, I shall console myself by the contemplation of those blessed spirits who in the same holy cause have toiled, and shone, and suffered. In the "goodly fellowship of the saints"—in the "noble army of martyrs"—in the society of the great, and good, and wise of every nation—if my sinfulness be not cleansed, and my darkness be not illuminated, at least my pretensionless submission may be excused. If I err with the luminaries I have chosen for my guides, I confess myself captivated by the loveliness of their aberrations. If they err, it is in a heavenly region; if they wander, it is in the fields of light; if they aspire, it is, at all events, a glorious daring; and rather than sink with infidelity into the dust, I am content to cheat myself with their vision of eternity. It may, indeed, be nothing but delusion; but then I err with the disciples of philosophy and of virtue; with men who have drunk deep at the fountain of human knowledge, but who dissolved not the pearl of their salvation in the draught. I err with Bacon, the great confidant of nature, fraught with all the learning of the past, and almost prescient of the future, yet too wise not to know his weakness, and too philosophic not to feel his ignorance. I err with Milton, rising on an angel's wing to heaven, and, like the bird of morn, soaring out of sight amid the music of his grateful piety. I err with Locke, whose pure philosophy only taught him to adore its source, whose warm love of genuine liberty was never chilled into rebellion with its Author. I err with Newton, whose star-like spirit shot athwart the darkness of the sphere, too soon to reascend to the home of its nativity."

If such believe it, why should not we? If such minds delight to bask in the sunlight of revelation, and have declared the blessedness of so doing, should we not take it to our embrace more fully, and yield ourselves to its influence more entirely?

But before these were was revelation. On what did it stand, then? On God — the best foundation in earth or heaven. Its Author is divine, and its claim to the world's reception the best established claim on record; therefore whatever it says of man, his history and destiny, his future life and its characteristic features, may be set down as unquestionable truth. Beyond this there is no appeal.

Nature is indeed the handmaid of revelation — one but corroborates the other; and this we might expect, since they boast a common parentage; but we are compelled to admit that all proper, and the only adequate, faith rests entirely upon the latter. It harmonizes with the deductions of sound reason, and all its cherished principles; but the low whispers of the one are not as the clear tones of the other. Hints are not as satisfying as assurances, and therefore it is that revelation rings out its jubilant anthems to him who is seeking for "glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life." Its confirming words quell doubt, and open "the map of God's extensive plan" in a new light. Then, as we look, —

"Eternity's unknown expanse appears,
Circling around and limiting our years," —

and as time recedes, instead of a fearful silence and a dread blank, there come from over the boundary the voices of a great multitude, saying, "Come to our shores, for life on earth was but the beginning of the more perfect one into which we have been ushered." Yea, more; the voice of the infinite God is heard above all, saying, "Come to my side, and I will show thee the meaning of thy strange discipline, and tell thee the secret of those ways thou wast wont to call unequal. Thou shalt see how, when thou wast defeated in a temporal end, it was that the endless might be enriched, and how at last Death came but to introduce to a broader, a holier, and loftier sphere."

Since the time of the Christian revelation, the door of immortality has been left, as it were, ajar. We know what is inside, and until the time come for us to enter in and become

participants of things within, we rest in hope. It was a memorable day, a wonderful and glorious day, when He came who burst the bars and opened the gates, displaying what had before been shut out from mortal gaze. Hitherto the truth had been stamped upon the soul of man, but it had been much as the invisible lines, that wait appropriate action before taking the form of clear, intelligent sentences, "known and read of all." It was then "brought to light," "full-orbed and glorious," to shed a divine radiance over life, at least life in its true sense.

The Scriptures, however, deal not so much in actual assertions respecting a future state, an endless life; but, as if this was a matter plainly unquestionable, the inspired writers dwell upon the nature and employments of such a state; the disposition it is necessary to possess; the virtues that must be cultivated in order to be fitted for the exercise and enjoyment of future felicity; and the duration, the everlasting nature of such a life. Having received particular and accurate knowledge of society in a certain locality, and having felt the influence radiating from such a centre, we need no argument to prove its existence. So, too, when the Bible tells us we shall "live again," and how we shall live,—when we feel the influence of eternity in remoulding and regenerating life and character,—do we need arguments to prove its reality? While walking with nature, we thought it might be true; but now, as we come to revelation, possibilities are lost in absolute knowledge.

"Here celestial voices

Hymn it unto our souls; according harps,
By angel fingers touched, sound forth still
The song of our great immortality."

The veil is removed, the vision is clear, and the soul made glad by the solemn yet joyful strains. We say not, however, that there was total blindness before this day, as some affirm who date the first recognition of the truth at the commencement of the Christian dispensation, and wrest the hope from the Jews —

God's chosen, ancient people. As the belief of a future state lies at the very foundation of religion, it is impossible to suppose that a people whom the Almighty had chosen to be his worshippers, and the depositaries of his revealed will, should have remained ignorant of this interesting and fundamental truth, and have had their views confined solely to the fleeting scenes of the present world. Very different was this from the reality, if we credit the truth of their history. "Faith" was the grand principle of the patriarchs, and prophets, and saints of olden time; and this includes a belief in the existence of God, and the rewards and retributions of a life to come. In all their services and sacrifices, — in their integrity of life, and contempt of the world, — were they not plainly actuated by the conviction of the reality of a future and invisible world. So far from being "ignorant," God seems to have sent them a revelation beforehand, that their earthly pilgrimage might be cheered by hopes of better things. How did Abraham gain his blessed title, "Father of the faithful," except by animating an elect host by considerations of the endless consequences which hinged upon efficient action in this life? When he "went out, not knowing whither he went," and when he lifted the knife at the mountain altar over the child of promise, he had an eye upon things "within the veil." Immortal life and its rewards were never more a matter of reality to any mortal man than to him who thus "obeyed." He "looked for," he expected "a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." No such city met his eye as he journeyed through the earthly Canaan; therefore we must of necessity suppose that his views and his desires extended beyond the limits of time, to other mansions more enduring than those made with hands.

Moses, too, possessing his spirit in meekness and patience, through manifold affliction and persecution "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." In all his trials, temptations, disappointments, and sorrows, he was buoyed up by the hope and expectation of reward — a reward infinitely above all that earth had to

offer ; for had he been content with such gain and such popularity, he might have been satisfied with the splendors of an Egyptian court, and the honors bestowed upon the accomplished son of Pharaoh's daughter : neither was it that he was eagerly looking for rich possessions in the goodly land, that would enable him to spend his declining days in luxury and ease, for he was not permitted so much as to enter the Canaan below. That which was so much the object of his anticipation, was none other than a celestial inheritance, before which all earthly titles grew pale and dim. When he climbed the top of Pisgah, and looked over the promised portion, although it was very fair, it was not like the "sweet fields, arrayed in living green," of which he doubtless had a glimpse as he lay down to die on his mountain couch ; for it is written of him, "he died in faith," and faith is "the conviction" of these things. Why should he choose, during his life, "to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin," unless he was assured that his future destiny would be affected by his course of action on earth ? Evidently he lived not for this world ; and so it might be said of all the patriarchs whose names stand high on the records of the Old Testament church. They "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth," and they lived as such, always declaring by their actions as well as words, "that they desired a better country, that is, a heavenly." When tortured by reason of their devotion to the Most High, they accepted not deliverance, "that they might obtain a better resurrection."

The writings of the prophets are interspersed with passages showing their hope in and confident expectation of a future life, and the consolation they derived from this source under the accumulated trials of probation.

What but this sustained Job, when the tempests of adversity swept over him, leaving scarcely a single relic of his prosperity ? When his heart was touched in the tenderest point, and bereft of all that he held dear, his triumphant language was, "I know

that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth : and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Thus was the almost overwhelming anguish of his soul mitigated by the belief that a happier future was yet in reserve, and that, though he was of "few days, and full of trouble," it mattered but little, since Jesus lived to reward at the last.

David, in his meditations, was often beyond the scenes of time and sense, exulting in the boundless prospect of immortality. His soul rose as on an angel's wing, as he contemplated "fulness of joy" in God's presence, and "pleasures for evermore" at his right hand. When disappointed, and pressed almost beyond human endurance by the burdens laid upon him by his envious foes and pretended friends, he looked up to the Eternal, saying, "I will behold thy face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness," and was comforted and encouraged to bear whatever was imposed upon him, since the future promised so much.

If conflicting interests brought him into doubt and perplexity, he hied himself to the same source ; and again he says, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." When the pale messenger suggested a final termination to his earthly career, he gave not way to lingering regrets, for he said in his heart, "I will fear no evil ;" "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." "My flesh and my heart faileth ; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." What mean such confident declarations as these, but that the soul of Israel's shepherd was divinely taught to expect a peaceful gathering into the "green pastures" that border the "still waters" of the better land ? The hope of being one of the all-embracing fold of the heavenly Shepherd, after he had done with his own watchings, and fulfilled his own calling, constantly animated him, whether he roamed with his flocks through the quiet pastures of his father, or sat upon the throne with the power of a king.

Over and above all was the felicity he hoped to enjoy when the "King of kings" should call him to his service in the upper temple; when, having redeemed him from the grave, he should permit him to "sing of salvation forever and ever," in the courts of the Lord's house above, his disembodied and exulting spirit having no restraint in the holy endeavor to which his burning love prompted.

The rapt spirit of Isaiah could not keep silence as he beheld the time when "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads;" when "they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Jeremiah forgot the cause of his mourning and lamentation for a time when he said, "The Lord is my portion;" and Daniel saw the sun, moon, and stars grow dim before the "wise" who should "shine" in the kingdom of God "forever and ever."

Surely the idea of an immortal life was not strange to the patriarchs and prophets of olden time; and if they omitted to dwell upon it in minute detail, it was because "it was a truth so well understood, so generally recognized, and so essential to the very idea of religion, that it would have been superfluous to do so, or to bring it forward as a new discovery. Everywhere the doctrine is implied, if not absolutely affirmed. If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were as unconscious as the rocky sepulchres to which they were committed, would the timid servant at the 'burning bush,' years afterward, have heard such an announcement as this for his encouragement—"I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? Would he have acknowledged such a relation,—peculiar still, for 'I am' was the expression, not 'I was,'—if they had ceased to be?"

When these "were gathered to their fathers," so far from supposing the cessation of intelligent life and action, they were more than willing to bid adieu to the "few and evil days" of

their earthly pilgrimage, that they might join the "spirits of the just made perfect," and enjoy the congenial society of those eminent for piety, who had passed before them into the invisible world.

It is not to be denied, however, that the clearest light comes fully to this subject from the gospel — that the twilight never disappeared until Christ, "the Light of the world," arose to scatter the darkness, and illumine the earth with his divine beams. And when he takes his place among the arrogant disciples of the schools, we find no argument in defence of immortality, but, as if it was a fact not to be questioned, instructions concerning a preparation for it are incidentally mingled in all his discourses.

There were those who professed to disbelieve the truth in his day; but see him turn from the Sadducean crowds, to declare of his followers "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." The devoted band that hung upon his lips and listened to his wonderful words were filled with inexpressible sadness as the end of his ministry drew near, and he was passing out of sight; but as a burst of sunshine through a dark cloud was that voice in the day of gloom, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." When the last hymn had been sung, the last prayer uttered, and the last words of consolation had been addressed to his sorrowing disciples, — when the last mournful tragedy was being enacted, and he was about to reascend to his native throne, — he presented, as it were, a living confirmation of the truth in the dying thief, whom that memorable day should find with him "in Paradise."

If the disciples had ever doubted, could they doubt it longer? Paradise — a place of delight — their Lord had prepared; and how were they straitened until admittance should be granted them! And of kindred feeling were the apostles, whose



expressions clearly demonstrate the certainty of an eternal state, and the reality of its miseries and its bliss, according to the soul's fitness for it. Paul, amid the varied tribulation of his lot, could say, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but those which are not seen are eternal." When he saw his companions and Christian fellow-laborers falling around him, and he was reminded of the time when he must lay aside his own mortality, he could give expression to the perfect assurance, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" and when the angel was sent with the summons that the time of his departure was at hand, he considered his exit but as a welcome introduction to a blessed life, saying with his dying breath, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." What visions, too, had the ardent and glowing Peter, of "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for" those who believed in, and loved, and served the Crucified! When the foes of religion silenced the music of his voice by breaking the strings of life, there lingered strains that have never died out, concerning "lively hope," "crown of glory," and blessed "salvation." His last injunction, to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ," would be strange hyperbole were there no life but this, and strangely at variance with any principle of rational action; for this, when wisely conducted, is measured by the worth of the result.

The apostles also dwell much upon the manner in which heavenly happiness is to be obtained, and of the disposition it

is necessary to possess in order to enjoy it forever, saying, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." "To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality," God will recompense "eternal life." He that "doeth the will of God," and he that "overcometh," is the one to inherit, the one to become a pillar in God's temple;

But it was given unto John — the beloved John — to know more and see farther than any other mortal man had ever seen or known. He had stood with Peter and James on the mount of transfiguration, when "Moses and Elias appeared, talking" (evidence enough of immortality), and they had together fallen upon their faces with fear; but when, in later days, he "was in the Spirit," listening to the trumpet tones of a mighty voice, saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; I am alive for evermore;" "What thou seest write in a book," then he uttered joyful words and said eloquent things of what were, after all, "unutterable sights," and sounds that were never to be communicated to other mortal ears than his.

A vision of the New Jerusalem, with its inconceivable glory and endless cycles of complete bliss, beamed upon him, — a living, a glorious reality. He saw the inexpressible brightness that came from the great white throne, the angel throng, the redeemed saints that no man could number, the crystal sea, the streets of gold, and gates of pearl; and his seraphic spirit was kindled into ecstasy as there issued from the untold splendors of the scene the ravishing sounds of "harpers," whose skilful touch produced songs of thrilling harmony in honor of Him who sat upon the throne, and through whom the multitude had been gathered there. Loud "Alleluias" continually ascended from the countless hosts, and "forever and ever" was the chorus of the song. The united company cast their crowns at the feet of Him who had redeemed them, and shouted still

another anthem because of the "*forever*," and the constant accession to the joy of their raptured spirits. Whatever it was in which the white-robed assembly engaged, there ever remained the blessed consciousness of no diminution of pleasure, but rather a constant accession, throughout a period of interminable length.

When the "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" joined in the song of praise to "the Lamb that was slain," heaven resounded with the echo — "*forever and ever*;" and it seems not strange that the beloved disciple, under the influence of the beatific vision, and of heavenly harmonies, should rejoice to hear the assurance, "Behold, I come quickly." "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter," had been the confiding declaration of the Most High unto him. Obedience to his Lord secured a more delectable position than had ever yet been enjoyed by mortal; but the time had not yet come for his full release, and for the rich possession of what he saw. He must tell others of the land beyond, that pilgrims in all time might be animated by the blissful prospect. But what could shadow the celestial glory?

The choicest, the rarest, and most beautiful things of earth, the richest and loveliest forms of nature and art, were exhausted in the attempt to portray somewhat of the indescribable blessedness, and bring it within the appreciation of the human soul, that is always and ever longing for future good; but language was all too poor for the reality, for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Have we not here proofs of immortality? Is it not placed beyond a doubt by "the sure word of prophecy"? To doubt it must be to reject the whole inspired word, and become lost in the mazes of perplexity — in darkness whence no light can come. One may feel dissatisfied with the teachings of Nature, and count the evidence of his senses as an uncertain thing,

since they *may* deceive; but we all acknowledge, if there be any certainty anywhere, it is in the nature and attributes of the Infinite, and whatever they are pledged to sustain. Then, when his word says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment," and forewarns of the time when the angel reapers shall gather the wheat, and cast out the tares, what are we to suppose, but that men have living souls that will act and be acted upon in another sphere, — and that sphere independent of *time, earth, or sense*? But we are not to do with supposition now. On the pages of the inspired volume immortality is traced by more than angel's pen; it is there in characters of living light; it is there as the burning words of more than seraph's tongue; there is "everlasting life." Christians are God-constituted heirs to a blessed inheritance in the immortal land; and some of these heirs, those who have regarded most faithfully the will and testament of their Benefactor, have had blessed communications — have been taken aside, as it were, and shown the magnificence of the estate that was eventually to come to them.

If Doddridge had doubted immortality, he would no longer have done so after that memorable night, when the gates of the *upper temple* were thrown open, and he saw what had been and what was yet to be in his own history.

If William Tennent had ever wavered, he must have ceased from the time he experienced the three days that seemed as one hour, in which he had remarkable views of another life, revealing, as it seemed, in the very bliss of heaven.

Yet these saw nothing more than what revelation had assured them of; they dreamed of no more than what had been told them here. Their impressions might have been, and probably were, more vivid; but it was not the awakening of immortal hopes, only their confirmation. Then, though all the teachings of reason be inadequate, there is one true, reliable source of evidence to which we may turn, with the firm and unalterable assurance that whatever is gained from it is as the unchangeable

character of Jehovah. Reason may err, but revelation cannot. The former partially slips the bolt that hides the treasure — the latter throws wide open the door, and bids man go in to make himself rich forever. One softly whispers that the thinking principle in man *may be* eternal, as the years of God; the other loudly proclaims that it *must* live forever.

Ah, *futurity!* it is established, it is grounded on an immovable rock, having an unfailing lighthouse, for the safety of the poor mariners who are tossed on the waves about it.

"It is indeed a wide ocean," said one, "full of waves and dangers, storms and tempests; and, like the Atlantic before the adventurous Genoese first crossed it, no one comes back to tell us what is beyond. But as, to the eye of Columbus, enlightened by true genius, it was self-evident that, to harmonize with the known world in which he dwelt, there must be another continent beyond the wide western sea, so to the eye of the religious man, enlightened by revelation, it is self-evident that beyond the ocean of time there must be another world to equalize all that is unequal in this."

To the Christian mariner, "waves and dangers" are only incident to the voyage thither. When he shall have reached the heavenly shores, and gone up to the goodly land, there will be no more "storms and tempests;" he will dwell "high on the hills of immortality" forever, and "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Did the sacred records only give us the bare declaration that we are immortal, it would be enough for our perfect acceptance of the belief, and to insure a course of action in accordance with it; but when it goes so far, and tells us so minutely of everything that shall characterize immortality, it seems an impossibility to deny it. We cannot deny it.

Revelation is the *central sun* — reason the *lesser light*; but both, with united voice, proclaim the truth. Everything joins in the solemn, universal song.

“’Tis in the gentle moonlight;
’Tis floating ’midst Day’s setting glories; Night,
Wrapped in her sable robe, with silent step,
Comes to our bed, and breathes it in our ears;
Night, and the dawn, bright day, and thoughtful eve,
All time, all bounds, the limitless expanse,
As one vast, mystic instrument, are touched
By an unseen, living hand, and conscious chords
Quiver with joy in this great jubilee.
The dying hear it; and, as sounds of earth
Grow dull and distant, wake their passing souls
To mingle in this heavenly harmony.”

CHAPTER XI.

WISDOM CRIES, A WORK TO BE DONE.

*Time with Reference to Eternity. — Strange Indifference of the Worldling.
 — Direction of human Effort. — Cardinal Wolsey. — The Excursion. —
 Blessedness of immortal Life. — The heathen Philosopher.*

“Is there, as reason, conscience, Scripture, say,
 Cause to provide for a great future day,
 When, earth’s assigned duration at an end,
 Man shall be summoned and the dead attend?
 The trumpet — will it sound, the curtain rise,
 And show the august tribunal of the skies,
 Where no prevarication shall avail,
 Where eloquence and artifice shall fail,
 The pride of arrogant distinctions fall,
 And conscience and our conduct judge us all?” — *Cowper.*

“LIKE a little child that has sprung on a little way before its playmates,” says one, “and caught a glimpse through an open portal of some varied Eden within, all gay with flowers, and musical with birds, and haunted by divine shapes which beckon forward, and, after one rapturous survey, runs back and catches its companions by the hand, and hurries them forward to share the new-found pleasure, the yet unexplored region of delight, — even so it is with me: I am on the outside, not the inside, of the door I open.”

We are yet mortal; we have caught a glimpse of immortality, and through faith, its twin sister, we have gained entrance to fairer fields than we had dreamed of while following the guidance of reason; we have heard whispers from the eternal side, and our spirit faculties have arisen to claim affinity with the unseen. Here, “earth and heaven, time and eternity, the finite

and the infinite," have met to exchange sympathies; and absorbed in the contemplation of the boundless prospect, rejoicing in the bright hopes to which it gives birth, we have said to ourselves, "For what is earth so valuable as for a memento of something better? What use shall strangers and pilgrims make of it, save as a volume from which to get the alphabet of celestial science, save as a rude wharf from which they embark, a tottering bridge over which they pass to the better land?" Ours is a sin-blighted world, and though it retains much that is attractive, much to make us cling to it, yet the human heart is, as it were, a living receptacle, where germinate a thousand griefs that contrast strangely with the bursting buds that promised so much of beauty and joy. A glimpse of the fairer fields that lie beyond, in beautiful perspective, makes the present grow dim, so that the lisping tongue of childhood has joined with the tired pilgrim of many years in saying, "I am weary of life, and I would go to my rest." When once firmly held by the hand of Faith, she begets not only a hope, but a desire to reach the welcome harbor, to drop the anchor, and dwell securely, far from torturing fears and distressing anxieties, those things which oppress the voyagers of Time so much in all their course.

Now, if it be once and forever established that there is an everlasting existence beyond the grave, that this life is but the beginning of a life that is to continue through a period of such duration that the most capacious powers fail in the attempt to grasp an idea of it, and that this is but a disciplinary state, and on the improvement of the discipline depends the character of this mysterious Eternity, — if we believe this, how much it becometh us to take heed to the matter of preparation! How ill to pause and while away the time on trifles! There is a sense in which it may be written of Time, "How momentous!" but only as it is associated with that other, and still more fearfully momentous thing — Eternity.

To live forever we have seen to be a natural desire of the

human soul, and to live happily is the idea linked with that of living at all. This hope animates almost all the inhabitants of earth; especially does it control those who feel that they have a passport which will admit them safely into the celestial regions, of which they have heard until their hearts burn within them, until they are conscious of an inexpressible desire to depart, that they may realize the fulfilment of so glorious a dream; not like the heathen philosopher of the past, who plunged into the Unknown with an uncertain hope, but as one who has heard the voice of Revelation assuring him of a blissful certainty, a happy and blessed immortality. But who are they that live with an abiding impression that these things are really so—that this life is but a hand's breadth and the life to come immeasurable? As we look out upon the pomp and pageantry of human life, and witness the distinctions of society, the passion for honor and preferment, the warrings and strifes of ambition for fame and high position, the trampling of right under the crushing pressure of might, the attempt to pile treasures of gold exceeding high, the means used to gain a little spot of earth,—as we see these things, a natural conclusion would be, that time offers the greatest inducement to constant and continued exertion, that the energies of soul and body may be more profitably expended upon this sublunary scene, this lower world, where there is so much to strive for, so much to obtain. But what says Revelation, —“the sure word of prophecy,”—that which opens the unseen, and discovers the really true and good? Go on in the enjoyment of every possible acquisition that earth can afford, and proudly exult in the brilliancy of success; but there is “a hand writing” that appears amid the glitter and excitement of it all, which may be interpreted thus “Thy days are numbered and finished; thou must leave the world; and be sure thou canst carry nothing that thou hast with thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast treasured?” With the vast majority of those who throng the great thoroughfare of life, present enjoyment seems

the ultimate end of all their efforts. Even those who profess belief in immortal life and its rewards seem strangely indifferent to those things which are but just before them, those things which they are ready to acknowledge infinitely transcend all that is to be found in this transitory scene.

"To cultivate the intellectual faculties, to aspire after moral excellence, to devote the active powers to the glory of the Creator and the benefit of mankind, to live as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, to consider the glories of this world as a transient scene that will soon pass away, and to keep the eye constantly fixed on the realities of an immortal life, are characteristics of only a few;" and yet every day that the Bible is opened one sees that attention to these things is pronounced the highest wisdom, and that those who come the nearest to the divine standard are those who make the temporal subservient to the spiritual. Under the light of revelation it has become the prominent, settled belief of all classes, that this life is, as it were, but an interlude, an interval to gain power for more extended action; but theory and practice seldom come together, and consequently we see men crowding on, continually saying, —

"Life is but a winter's day,
A journey to the tomb," —

and continually acting as if it were an endless day, that called for great stores to meet its prolonged necessities.

The lover of pleasure, at the same time that he will acknowledge himself standing on the verge of the eternal world, will go on in the unrestrained indulgence of his sensual appetites and desires, and allow himself to be engrossed with the frivolities of time and sense, although he knows that the knell may at any time sound that will speak his departure from probationary scenes, and his entrance upon those that are retributive. He may even see Death numbering his daily victims about him, may see his relatives drop one after another into the grave; and beyond the sorrow occasioned by his own personal loss, the

grief experienced by his desolated spirit for want of smiles and words that had hitherto been a comfort and a joy, he fails to lay these things to heart, to let them confirm and bring nearer the realities of the future, to incorporate them into present practical life, and thus insure the requisite preparation for a blessed life beyond this world.

Those whose hearts are set upon the acquisition of wealth have their minds continually racked by new schemes, and their bodies wearied with the earnestness of the effort required for the realization of their golden dreams. No sacrifice is thought too much; personal ease is nothing; they will forego comfort and convenience, refuse the claims of friendship, and even neglect those that are nearer and more weighty, if they interfere with the cherished plans of accumulation; and this while the declaration of solemn import is sounding in their ears, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" and while they profess to believe that the appeal comes with all the force of divine authority, and therefore unquestionably true in its fearful suggestions. Notwithstanding such a profession, they rush on in the eager pursuit, full of anticipation and hope; and with every shining dollar that drops into the coffer, a new impulse is given to proud ambition, and thought comes as a guest to intimate that the monument to memory is becoming taller and richer, and perchance among men it will be considered that another "cubit is added to the stature"—that the step higher merits a better and loftier seat. Having reached the high plane where Benevolence delights to walk, instead of hearkening to her pleading tones, they spurn the angel visitant, and shut their eyes upon the dismal prospects toward which she turns with mild and pitying look. To build and increase is the motto of this class, despite what they know of storms, winds, and tempests, that are wont to sweep away the palaces and treasures that are resting upon sandy foundations, leaving no trace of their existence. Everything bends to the selfish

desire of acquiring large and splendid possessions in time, although there is a familiar writing that tells of "mansions" and a goodly inheritance that may be had, and forever enjoyed, without fear of spurious title, or anxiety lest unjust procedure wrest it away.

Were these actuated by a firm and practical belief in immortality, would not the consideration of "Canaan's goodly land," with its transcendently glorious possessions, be infinitely more animating than the unreliable things of earth? It is because mankind are so much wanting in practical faith that there is so much difference between "here and there;" that they toil on through threescore years, intent upon the present until the last moment of earthly existence, even though revelation has so blessedly assured it is better there than here.

Behold the men who love popular applause, who trample upon every principle of truth and justice, who are careless of integrity, and strangers to charity, if by it they may gain the position which will insure for them the adulation of the crowd — if they may reach a point from whence they may look down to catch the upturned — perhaps admiring — gaze of the envious multitude. What do such think of "the honor that cometh from God only"? of the "crowns" that shall be given to the wise and good, when the new era shall dawn, when the new drama shall appear, and they shall be either willing or unwilling actors? What do those think, of whom the midnight hours testify a vast expenditure of God-given energy, merely that the annals of Fame may beam brighter to them, by the record they may bear of themselves? Of what account is it to have the name engraved a little higher than some other name? The tablet which bears the names of all earth's honored ones is perishable, and it is not long ere they grow so dim as scarcely to be traced. Better to have that "new name" written, which shall stand forever. It is beyond the reach of the finger of time, on imperishable parchment, written in the fadeless colors prepared by a divine hand.

A well-known cardinal once sought distinction at the court of his king. He found it; but the sad words that appear at the close of his eventful history are these: "Had I been as diligent to serve my God as I have been to please my king, he would not have forsaken me now in my old age." And so it might be written of many: had they been half as earnest and thoughtful in their preparation for the immortal as for the perishable, they might have been exulting in the reward of their endeavors. When a friend accosted the prince of the Latin poets with the question why he studied so much accuracy in the plan of his poem, the propriety of his characters, and the purity of his diction, he replied, "I am writing for eternity." Much more, then, should we be prompted to the utmost vigilance and circumspection as we reflect upon that which is still more true, "We are *living* for eternity." We are sowing here, and the harvest will not be ripe until the sun of the last day has shone upon it. Then the trumpet will sound, the reapers will be called, and each man's work will appear, and each man's reward will be assigned. How important that there be something to show a fidelity in the work and a claim to the reward!

When a future, endless life remained a matter of supposition, the wisest of earth's philosophers were deeply interested in the probability of such a result; and shall the interest be less with those who live now, and "know whereof they affirm"? When one is thoroughly enlisted in any subject, it is evident in all his thoughts, affections, and pursuits; so when one is duly impressed with this great doctrine of immortality, it will exert an influence upon the minutest action of his life.

A man of business planned an excursion to a distant shore. Of the resources, the scenery, the manners and customs of the people of the country he knew no more than what other travellers had told him; but from the time he came to the conclusion to be himself a witness to these things,—from the time they became associated with his own interest and happiness,—the thoughts and the efforts of every moment were

directed to this one end. Maps, charts, guides, histories, geographies, were all consulted for peculiarities of locality, custom, or whatever might in any way tend to his comfort or advantage, or increase his store of knowledge and information. Those whom he met could not fail to know the thing in which he was engaged, for his interest was manifest in all his conversation as well as his action.

Provision was made for the enhancement of the profit and pleasure of the stay, and oceans and vessels, with other things concerning his progress, were regarded with unwonted interest. How carefully he avoided danger and counted upon his arrival in a foreign land! His heart was upon the voyage, and his thoughts and conduct showed it. But why this solicitous regard about things here? It contrasts strangely with that manifested by the voyagers that are "homeward bound" to an eternal shore—to a country possessing indescribable loveliness, where variety and beauty blend in untold richness, and whose resources are boundless and free to the travellers who reach it. Intelligence has reached us of the wonderful scenery there, of unsurpassed architecture, beautiful mansions, costly streets, delightful fields watered by crystal streams; of a supremely happy people, blessed society, and every imaginable good to promote pure and perfect felicity; and yet, apparently, this prospect excites less of interest than the brief, imperfect scenes which allure the traveller on the shores of time. We hear of aromatic breezes that come from islands of the sea, of flowers that bloom in rich luxuriance in tropical climates, of juicy fruits in delicious clusters, of gorgeous sunsets in Italia's land, of charming valleys beneath Oriental skies, of gulfs opulent with pearls, of gold on far-off shores, and all the enthusiasm of our nature is kindled; we are ready to brave every danger and cross every sea to have our senses regaled and our treasures enlarged. For this we will turn away from the one, true, happy land, with its breezes of eternal freshness; its flowers of fadeless hues; its

fruit from trees whose very "leaves are for the healing of the nations;" its clear, transparent, grateful light, before which the sun grows dim and vanishes, and Luna's rays are forever obscured. In our weary and wasting efforts to see a little of earth, we forget the land of perpetual spring, of immortal youth and vigor, and of such unparalleled wealth and splendor, that its very gates are pearl, its streets gold, and its inhabitants constantly arrayed in the richest of robes, wearing crowns for the very abundance of treasures.

All this was promised in the day that Christ appeared to bring "immortality to light;" but for some reason, "golden dreams of heavenly plains" have less influence than like visions of plains below, or at least are slower to wake corresponding action.

It is only when practical faith takes hold of the immortal, and it is introduced to the soul as a living reality, that the appropriate line is drawn, and both, the mortal and the immortal, assume their relative importance; the one great in its magnitude, the other exceeding small. It is under the influence of this active belief that one is led to form a true and just estimate of the value of all terrestrial things; for, as we see and feel the superiority of things only by contrast, so it is only when the light of eternity beams in upon the soul, and it sees the utter insignificance of the earthly as compared with the heavenly, that the full force of the command is felt to lay up treasures for the life to come. To the soul conscious of a speedy departure from time what are secular cares and plans? what earthly fame or renown? what the fascinations or allurements of a pleasure-promising world? They have no place, no power. The heart is attracted to other scenes, and engrossed with other objects; it grasps the *infinite*, and loses the *finite*.

The time of departure must come to all. We are embarked on the voyage, and the "boatman's oar" is bearing us on to the farther shore. We may almost have reached Jordan's

current, the last stream to be passed; and if under the right Captain, ere we are over, we may hear the voices of the shining ones, singing of redemption, forever and ever. If the ocean pilot find a necessity for constant watch, lest the shoals and breakers, rocks and quicksands, may harm or destroy his vessel, and endanger his material life, how much greater the necessity for a continual lookout for those things that threaten irremediable harm to the immaterial thing that every one bears with him on his voyage to eternity! Oftentimes, in the course thitherward, the tempests rage and the billows roar; but when Faith sits at the helm, fear is quieted and anxiety quelled by its encouraging tones, its assurances of ultimate peace and safety. The *better country* is descried in the distance, and all sublunary things fade away before the coming glory.

The imagination of a heathen philosopher pierced the heavens, to expatiate in their boundless regions; to behold the magnitude and dwell upon the beauty of the mysterious and mighty orbs, rolling through their measureless cycles; and, dazzled by the scene, as well as awed by the grandeur, he glanced to his native earth, saying, "Is it to this little spot that the great designs and vast desires of men are confined? Is it for this there is such disturbance of nations, so much carnage, and so many ruinous wars? O folly of deceived men! to imagine great kingdoms in the compass of an atom; to raise armies, to divide a point of earth with their swords! It is just as if the ants should divide their molchills into provinces, and conceive a field to be several kingdoms, and fiercely contend to enlarge their borders, and celebrate a triumph in gaining a foot of earth, as a new province to their empire."

What significance in the words *here* and *there*, *now* and *then*! how poor is the present compared with the future! how unworthy the strifes and toils we so often see, the anxieties we so often feel! Upon everything here, upon these mortal shores, is written *Fading and transitory*. That which we seek either eludes our grasp altogether, or sadly disappoints us in

the possession, so that we are ready to cry, "Is there no world where the worm never gnaws at the root of the rose? where the lacerating thorn is not concealed in everything that is fair?"

Such a place is the immortal land, according to Revelation, and a cordial recognition of such a fact does much toward reconciling the mind to the disappointments, the sorrows, and privations incident to mortality. *Now* uncertainty may be stamped upon all that surrounds my pathway; *then* it will be exchanged for the everlasting. *Now* that in which my soul delights may take wings and fly away, leaving me sad in my desolation; but *then* the heart will never be troubled by apprehensions of being forsaken, for fear is not in the vocabulary that will be the standard there. *Now* the Angel of Death may interrupt the costliest schemes, and put an end to the most prosperous career; but *then* there shall be nothing to disturb the peaceful flow of prosperity forever. It is the faithful who are versed in the signification of these things — who find hidden lore in these little words, that is as manna to their hungry souls.

Since the occasion that called forth the song, "Glory to God in the highest," — since Bethlehem's plains resounded with the heavenly chorus, "On earth peace, good will toward men," — there has been a new and blessed administration. A sovereign remedy was then introduced in "Gilead's balm" for all the woes and wounds of mankind. Sin-stricken souls, and bleeding, burdened hearts may no longer mourn over their hopeless and incurable griefs; the captive and oppressed may no longer pine under the weight of their chains; for the time of deliverance has come, and the Monarch of Israel is waiting to unloose.

If we truly and firmly believe that there is a future eternity, — that there is a "Divinity that shapes our ends" here with reference to that future, — then what shall equal our desire to yield ourselves up to the divine moulding, or measure the solicitude we feel to become fitted for the exercise and relish of the employments and enjoyments of the world to which we most

surely tend? If we recognize the idea of an immortal life, how natural to desire clear and comprehensive views concerning it; to know as much as possible of the nature and duration of its pleasures, the character and extent of its occupations; in short, to know everything that can be known respecting it!

"We will not be satisfied with vague and confused conceptions of celestial bliss, but will endeavor to form as precise and definite ideas on the subject as the circumstances of our sublunary station will permit." Thus soliloquized one who has now gone to experience the full fruition of that which seemed so fair, and yet so imperfect while on earth, because so many things obstruct mortal vision.

Socrates, and others of antiquity, when they came to the final conflict, the last hour, strongly hoped they should know of victory and possession in another land; and this hope had its influence. But we, who live under the Christian dispensation, with the privilege of hopes anchored "within the veil," may sing, with triumph, the songs of immortality, and shout with exultation as the banner is lifted before the conquering Lord, bearing the glorious inscription, "Life and immortality are brought to light." They who join the triumphal host, who march in due procession to the end, shall find the gates that open to receive them "adorned with wondrous grace," and an arch encircling all, upon which may be seen, in ever-enduring characters, "Him that overcometh shall go no more out," and "The kingdom and dominion shall be given to the saints of the Most High."

CHAPTER XII.

DEATH THE PORTAL TO THE UNSEEN.

Sentence in Eden. — Nature of the Change. — Valley and Stream unknown. — Heathen Notions of Death. — Sounds from Hindoo Shores. — Sceptical Ideas. — Effect of Christ's Mission. — Luther and Melancthon. — Christian Views. — No Death in Heaven.

“Boast not thy victory, Death!

It is but as the cloud's o'er the sunbeam's power;
It is but as the winter's o'er leaf and flower,
That slumber the snow beneath.

“It is but as a tyrant's reign

O'er the voice and the lip which he bids be still;
But the fiery thought and the lofty will
Are not for him to chain!” — *Mrs. Hemans.*

FROM the time the guilty pair heard the painful and irrevocable sentence among the groves of Paradise, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,” mystery and anxiety have been associated to invest the last hour of mortal being with solemnity and terror. Nothing more appalls men than the thought of this change, or so effectually frights them, as the sight of the dread messenger that is about to put an end to probation, and lead on into other, strange, and unknown scenes. They would fain prolong acquaintance with “things that are seen,” and they desire to be ministered unto yet longer by the material senses, although these are often the occasion of acute and prolonged suffering, sending dismay and gloom over a large period of earthly existence. It matters not how sombre the cloud that encircles us; we prefer to become enveloped in darker folds than we have yet seen, rather than to experience

the Cimmerian gloom that preludes we know not what. When the words echoed through the bowers of Eden, "Thou shalt surely die," they sent a pang through the souls of the favored two who dwelt there, and the question which, doubtless, agitated their minds at the annunciation has stirred all their posterity to the same eager inquiry, What is death? They had been accustomed to ease, or perfect and delightful rest; to the fullest and freest enjoyment in everything about them; to happiest intercourse with each other; to the most blissful content — the harmony of complete existence — without idea or thought of cessation. No precedent existed to remind them of decay, nothing to bring satiety; and as the fatal and eventful hour approached that made it necessary to pronounce the fearful sentence, what terrible significance was in it! A blight came upon all things; the gates were opened, and the joyful and fearless went forth to find fear, trouble, and wasting labor; to find thorns thickly studding the flowers that had hitherto been thornless; to find disappointments associated with pleasures that had before been without a sting; to find things alluring only to deceive, and beauty everywhere sadly marred and defaced. No wonder if the mournful change were thought death; if they dreamed they had issued into a dying world, although ignorant of the extent of that "death and all our woe," which had in reality started on its ceaseless round of devastation and grief since the fatal moment of yielding to the tempter. But the blight that fell upon the natural world was not like that which came with scathful power upon the moral, and the hearts of Eden's exiles were less concerned for fading nature than the sin-ruined waste within. A comparatively barren desert was before them, in which to wander the rest of their doubtful pilgrimage; but this thought was not so painful, or the sight so cheerless, as the consideration — the glimpse of that other realm over which conscience presided so jealously. As they found themselves arraigned at this tribunal to answer to the charges of which they were verily guilty,

Death, like an "armed foe," stood at their sides to threaten and distress them. There was no appeal. The fiat had gone forth, and the Judge was inexorable. The trembling culprits must bow at the stroke, to ask on until the time came to know by personal experience, "And what may death be?"

Promises and revelations were indeed given to quell the anguish and mitigate the sorrows of the unhappy pair; and far down the vista of time they discovered the march of a triumphant conqueror who should vanquish the foe, yet in the matter of deliverance there was no reprieve. Power had been given the Destroying Angel to send forth his arrows and his darts over all the plains of life, and wherever human hearts were found beating, there should he have right to do his desolating work. Before him they must inevitably bow. Whatever might be the circumstances in which they were placed, however strong the inducements for lengthened days, however urgent the claims of affection, the pleadings of necessity, the entreaties and promises of ambition and hope, it would avail nothing. If they be his chosen victims, willing or unwilling, they must fall to rise no more in the day of visitation. Whether death would have entered our world if things had remained according to original purity and perfectness, we cannot know. It seems unlikely to suppose that material frames would have been left to immortality upon earth; but the "how" of these things is among the unknown and the unwritten — the unrevealed; and therefore we may not attempt to pry into "the folded leaves," or, attempting, forever fail in our object. This much we do know, that Death is abroad. He is constantly crossing our paths, and as often intimating that a conflict is nearing between himself and us; and this much is evident also, that he takes to himself a frightful form, and is clothed with terror, because of man's fatal disobedience to God.

Had it been the portion, or were it to have been, under the clear-sightedness and purity of the first creation, to meet a

change, to feel the influence of decay, it would, in all probability, have been the gradual, painless wearing away of nature; the laying aside of a garment no longer of use; the lying down to peaceful sleep at the close of a happy day. The sun would not sink more calmly beneath the western horizon, amid fleecy clouds of gold and amber, on a tranquil day of summer, than the righteous spirit would sink into everlasting bliss after having pursued its luminous way to the end of its course on earth. But, alas! it is not so. We turn from the contemplation of what might have been to what is; to ask again, What is death? and to meet the reply, It is that which "mocks at wisdom, strength, and beauty; disarranges our plans, robs us of our treasures, desolates our bosoms, breaks our heart-strings, and blasts our hopes." It is that which "extinguishes the glow of kindness, abolishes the most tender relations of man, severs him from all that he knows and loves, subjects him to an ordeal which thousands of millions have passed, but none can explain; and which will be as new to the last who gives up the ghost as it was to Abel" when he breathed out his life in presence of an envious brother, and passed away. When Adam and Eve looked upon the lifeless body of their dear child, — more dear from the narrow circle of earthly relatives, — and mourned as those bereft of a valued source of comfort, they began to experience what death brings — to realize the bitterness flowing from it; but this did not avail to acquaint them with the untried state upon which their beloved had opened his eyes, or to take from them entirely that shrinking to which they had been subject since the forbidden tree was visited and profanely handled.

That was a mournful paragraph in their history. Death became the penalty, and was entailed on all mankind; so that the last wail consequent upon the act shall not die out until regeneration shall have accomplished its whole work, — until the "kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ," and "the new heavens" and a

holy people reign until "corruption shall have put on incorruption, and mortality shall be swallowed up of life." What death really is, we cannot know until it takes us by the hand, — until we feel the icy touch that freezes the fountain of life, that congeals the warm current which gives vigor and animation to the animal frame, and transforms the active body to a clay-cold, inanimate mass, helpless, unconscious — dead !

We must, ourselves, go down through the dark valley, to know what is there ; we must cross the narrow stream ourselves, if we would know the characteristics of the valley and the stream ; for none ever threaded that vale and forded those waters, and came back to tell of the darkness and the coldness, or to say these are but appearances. Some have long stood on the borders of the river, and told us what they saw and how they felt, but we know not their actual experience while really contending with waves as they closed around them in mid-Jordan.

The same Word that bears record of immortality tells us of death ; and in proportion to the knowledge and influence of this Word is the proper view of it prevalent. That which concerns man so truly and certainly, will, of course, awaken speculation and inquiry. The patriarchs and prophets "received the promise afar off," and believed, so that when they had finished their course, and the time came for them to be "gathered to their fathers," they laid down as tired pilgrims to a refreshing sleep, expecting to awake to scenes of eternal gladness and interest in another state ; but nations that have remained ignorant of divinely-communicated teachings have had strange speculations and absurd theories respecting the dread visitant, whose unrelenting nature cannot be so propitiated as to grant exemption from his embrace. Despite offerings and sacrifices he will invade the most charmed circle, and turn their merriest songs into loudest lamentations, their strongest anticipations into deepest regrets, and make their boasted security but as a trembling foundation. Some tribes of men have thought that the

"demon," as they call it, might be frightened away, and various are the incantations to which they resort to influence Death to pass by; but as he proves uninfluenced by their enchantments, and lays low the warrior and the chief, they renew and redouble their efforts to exorcise the fiend, and thus secure the safety of the living.

The philosophy of all those without the gospel affords, indeed, but a comfortless prospect. One of these, interrogated with the question, What is death? replied, "It is an eternal sleep; the dread of the rich, the desire of the poor, the inevitable event, the robber of man, the flight of life, and the dissolution of all things." Such is the dismal prospect of heathen religion, though it is not to be denied that some of it is true in the Christian sense, for who has not felt most painfully that death is the "robber of man;" that it takes the most cherished possessions and carefully-tended treasures; that it is the "flight of life," and "the inevitable event"? But these considerations are one thing to the gospel believer, and quite another thing to him who, with the sceptic, declares there is no awakening from the sleep which death occasions. But there is no escape. Death finds the lone wanderer in the most retired haunt, the isolated hermit in his safely-thought retreat, as well as those who dwell in crowds and go in bands. He cuts down the former, and we are amazed; he singles out his victims from the latter, and we are forced to say,—

"Death loves a shining mark, a signal blow,
Which, while it executes, alarms."

It is related of Solomon that he was attended in a walk by one of his pupils, when their path was intercepted by the "Angel of Death." Awed and terrified by the unwelcome intruder, the pupil requested of his teacher an instantaneous transmission to some distant mountain. "It is granted," said the teacher, and forthwith he found himself on lofty heights in the distance, but only to be met by the same foe, to whom he addressed the words, "Wherefore didst thou come? I sought to flee from thy presence." This may be fable, but it is true that when we

would fly from the destroyer, he may meet us in the flight, and we cannot avoid the meeting, though we may seek it studiously. "We die as fast as we live," says one; "every moment subtracts from our duration on earth, as much as it adds to it," but with the Christian idea, — the Christian hope, — it is only

"Nightly pitching the tent
A day's march nearer home," —

it is only shortening the passage to a much wished-for country — only changing garments sooner, in preparation for appearance at the royal court, where a seat is waiting for its occupant.

How different a thing is it with those who have not looked through the bright mirror of revelation; who have not seen the light beaming from this source, and only perceive the shadowy hand of the grim monster stretched out to force them whither he would have them go!

What would be said of death were we to ask the throngs who have been down to the banks of the "sacred Ganges" with their gasping, dying ones — if we were to hear the faint testimony of those forsaken, and left to close their eyes unblessed by human love and friendship, with no music to cheer but the murmur of the stream, and no voice to whisper comfort in the last moment of expiring nature? From the living and the dying come no cheering sounds; only the ceaseless tread of the mighty foe, causing these shores to be bleached with human bones, and the expiring groans of a pitiable crowd, who neither understood life nor death, but passed away to a returnless land, concerning which they were also equally ignorant. Superstition and imagination, with their unreal, unsatisfying speculations, had indeed opened some sort of a door for them, but how wide or inviting may be inferred by the peculiarity of the views of this people, who thus express themselves: "Nor ought you to think it extraordinary that a person dies. It is more extraordinary that a person desires to live. If you confine a bird in a cage, though you cherish him with the greatest care, if the door be open he flies away. But

though there are nine openings in the body by which the soul may make its escape, and though the person be suffering the deepest distress, yet the soul is not willing to depart: this desire of life is more wonderful than death itself. When the soul has taken its flight then, why should you think it such an extraordinary thing? You are suffering for the sins of many former births; which sins, like a shadow, will pursue you, go where you will, and assume whatever shape you may, till they be expiated by suffering. If this were not so, why is it that a good man suffers, while a wicked man is raised to the pinnacle of prosperity? If men suffered only for the sins of this life, the good would have nothing but happiness, and the wicked nothing but sorrow." To those who originated this strange system the Christian idea of death was unknown. That which constituted its sting and made it terrible, although a reality of their tainted natures, was yet unappreciated, and the victory which had been obtained over it was yet an untaught mystery. They knew of a "country from whose bourn no traveller returns." They saw their ranks thinned by the Destroyer, but of the animating hopes, and characteristics of the undiscovered country, they knew nothing certainly; and it is not strange that when the elevating tidings of Christianity reached them, and they were told of a God who has death under his control, obedient to his mandate, and that it may be made, as it were, the portal to a blessed and immortal land, they sent a cry far over the waters to their more favored brethren, saying, "Come over and tell us of these things, for we are dying for lack of knowledge." As the mild radiance of divine truth has been shed over the Hindoo plains, the low wails from the thicket and the jungle have died out; the deluded worshippers at idolatrous shrines have grown less; the wretched victims on impious altars have ceased to covet the fire and the wheel to expedite their transit from time, and death is coming to be considered in the Christian sense, not only as a "friend to release from pain," but as that which in God's own time will unite the soul to its true sovereign, and bring it into a worthy and glorious sphere.

Another people pursuing their questionings as to "what feels the body when the soul expires," come, as the poet tells us, to this conclusion, that

"Death, so called, is but old matter, dressed
In some new figure and a varied vest.
Thus all things are but altered, nothing dies,
And here and there the unbodied spirit flies,
By time, or force, or sickness dispossessed,
And lodges where it lights, in man or beast."

These prospects, though cheerless and revolting indeed, were yet more desirable to the darkened spirits of the ancients, with their natural and tenacious love of life, than the other and still more fearful doom of going to their last couch with never a hope of living or thinking again. Such approach the dark stream with shrinkings and shudderings that are appalling. As the ghastly monarch stamps the seal upon them which marks them for his victims, they are plunged at once into a whirl of madness and a rush of uncertainty that is sickening to contemplate and worse to experience. "Save me, O save me!" said a once boasting atheist; "save me from the dreadful doom that awaits me; rescue me from the darkness that encircles me; for death threatens to quench not only the gushing fountain from whence issue the streams that sustain the animal principle, but it seems to lay its relentless grasp upon my hidden life, to crush out even the very power of thought."

What hopelessness and despair settle around such in the hour when they are compelled to go! What gloomy forebodings haunt their souls, notwithstanding they have professed to believe that death is a leap into the chasm of forgetfulness! that the last struggle with the unwelcome visitor is the only one they would ever be capable of experiencing, since then came an end to all capacity of doing or suffering, — of any rational action or enjoyment whatever.

"A fortune and a kingdom," said one, in the hour of his extremity, to his attendant, "if you will only prolong my life!

for I fear to follow the windings of that path through which I may be led, if I am fated to the will of so stern a guide as Death. I see nothing; I know nothing; all is a blank: but I tremble at nothingness, and fear to what I may be introduced — if, perchance, I be introduced to anything at all.”

The present age is not without some such doubting, sceptical minds, who jeer and scoff while at a fancied distance from the enemy, although the clarion notes of the gospel are continually sounding about them, sending forth soul-penetrating anthems to wake the soul to glad experience and pleasing anticipations in everything pertaining to spirit life. Although the boundary line between this world and the next be well defined, and the surging waves of the cold river are beaten back by the resistless force of Him who made a channel in the great deep; although the gospel affords a key to unlock a treasure-house for the soul, and provides for its ample furnishing in every emergency, they yet choose to turn away from the delightful prospect, and wrap themselves in the stifling folds of oblivion. They regard death, not as “progress to life,” not merely as a pause or suspension, but as the universal leveller, who is engaged in the very strange work of annihilating both the material and the spiritual in God’s world. With such a view, where is the Almighty Controller of events? Where is He who holds the “keys of death,” who “shuts and no man opens,” and reverses with equal readiness? It hurls him from his lofty throne, and sends disorder and dismay through the natural, moral, and spiritual realm, leaving no place, no corner where the spirit may hie to repose itself. There is no comfort to such.

A sect has sprung up in the nineteenth century who repudiate the commonly received views of death, or at least the gospel view, and invest it with their own meaning. Said a prominent individual of this number, “There is no such thing as dying;” and when interrogated as to the significance of such an expression, so contrary to all observation, there was only the indefinite reply, “I have beautiful views of the future.

— it is only a blessed *translation* when we leave the world.” Such indeed it is to hearty and true believers in revelation — to those who have cordially embraced the hand of the never-failing Guide ; but not to those who refuse the light that can only illumine the dark vale, as this same soul found when the valley opened to view. Then the pale messenger on the white horse revealed his true name and character, and the meeting and the conflict were dreaded. Disciples of the system flocked into the chamber of death, shutting out the followers of Him who had conquered the enemy, lest a word of regret should go forth to weaken their cause and unsettle their faith. But the word went, “ I am going to die, to be laid in the grave, and our error and philosophy are not that which will make a dying bed soft, or gild the tomb with brightness.” When the spirit trembles between two worlds, every fictitious thing is removed ; all is solemn reality, and nothing avails but the friendship of Jesus.

From the time Jesus came into the world death seemed a different thing. It was subject to his bidding. The two mourning sisters of Bethany deeply felt the desolations it made. When they saw their brother in his winding-sheet they thought it an end to all their happy intercourse on earth ; they wept that their circle was hopelessly invaded, and that the grave claimed what they loved so much, — for death was then, as now, a resolving of the body into its original dust, — passing a boundary not to be recrossed ; but the mighty, Incarnate One would establish his claims, show his power, reveal his sympathizing nature, his divine mission ; and therefore he would deviate from the usual order, and bring back the departed. His lips parted, and the dark sepulchre, that had held its tenant three long days, resounded with the words of authority, “ Come forth ! ” Death yielded back his victim at the summons, the bands which encircled him were broken, and the living no longer stood with the dead, for death had fled. The weeping, sorrowing circle no longer bowed their heads in

grief and despair, but lifted them with songs of grateful acknowledgment to Him who had let the bound go free — the dead return.

Death was a grievous reality to the stricken widow of Nain, as she followed close to the bier where her heart was bound, — lost to all things but the loneliness and anguish of her bereavement; expecting nothing but a dreary waste for the remainder of her earthly pilgrimage, since the love and sympathy of her last and only one was taken from her. The Angel of Death, with "viewless wing," had borne her treasure away; but there was one to note the act; and all unconscious of his near approach, the weeping mourner was following on to meet him. The meeting came; and before the sacred Leader the throng paused, the slow tread ceased, cries were hushed, the bearers relinquished their hold, and the youthful dead lay still, cold and pulseless. Jesus looked upon the scene; upon the lonely mother, and unbelieving crowd; and, with a divine and holy purpose, that beamed in his heavenly eye, he said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise!" Suddenly the bubbling of life's fountain was heard; the genial current flowed gratefully through the frozen veins; the eye sparkled, the lips unclosed, the countenance beamed with wonted fire, and the heart throbbed with a newness of joy.

It is not easy to tell which was then the stronger emotion in the mother's heart: joy that her child was again given to her embrace, or gratitude because there was One that was able to deliver.

Death, too, retired at his presence in the little chamber of the "damsel;" but nowhere does it seem to us as it does when Christ himself stands, an illustrious sufferer, on mournful, yet delightful Cavalry; when he dies on the cross — that cross that stirs all our pity and our grief, and is yet the centre and circumference of all our hopes; — when he was conveyed to the garden tomb — a tomb that could not hold him, upon which *victory* and *life* were the appropriate inscriptions —



for then Death was vanquished. Jesus had conquered, and his people were free; not free from the power of death over the physical nature, but having another and delightful freedom, that God's people could fully appreciate and enjoy.

Jesus hath removed the sting of death, so that multitudes since have acknowledged a "dying bed" to feel

"Soft as downy pillows are."

They have turned away from the promised luxury of earth — its silken couches and ease-inviting bowers — to lean upon the bosom of their Lord, and "breathe the life out sweetly there." Death to such is but the removal of "the outward bark of the tree" — the "scaling off, that the tree may expand with more thrift and freedom." It is exchanging an organism that is liable to jarring, friction, and decay, for one where all parts work with the most perfect harmony, and which is capable of producing the most glorious results from its tireless action.

"Death is but a step," said an exultant believer, "and that step brings me into Paradise, with all its glory and celestial music." "'Tis but a friend," said another, "to introduce me to the angelic throng and the blood-washed multitude, and I hail it with joy, even long for its coming." And so the rider on the pale horse comes on, sending his arrows on every side, thinning the ranks of old and young, heedless of joy and careless of sorrow, but finding a company who are ready to bare their bosoms to the influence of the dart, who have the exclamation in their hearts, "Do thy work, O Death! for thou dost but hasten the meeting we desire."

"If our course is indeed progressive, our walk through the mystic galleries of the universe is from the more outward to those more inward, where God in greater fulness dwells; but we must close the doors after us as we go! Death is the orderly, and withal the beautiful, method of travelling inward and upward through those degrees of existence, whose wards unlock, one after another, toward the shining courts of the Eternal King. In that ascent it is a glorious privilege to die

—to shut off the past when its ministries are done. Death does this, and no more, when the duties of one department have been accomplished. It shuts off the fore-scene, that no fond longings may make us keep looking back and reaching back with divided attention. What can we do with our mind parted and our affections cloven? Death is shutting the door, —shutting it on a pleasing retrospect it may be, on sweet and loving faces, on objects around which fond memories cling, on skies that smiled over our infancy, and led on the gay procession of our happy years; but then another door opens higher upward through the solemn galleries!" galleries, the exhibitions of which will keep the soul employed through all eternity by the inexhaustible variety and richness that will be manifest. These doings of Death with "pleasing retrospects" and "fond memories" would seem very strange without the key furnished by Jesus: the doors it closes would grate still more harshly were it not for the knowledge of inside glories, to appear when the time may come for the latch to be lifted.

We see not all yet, for we are short-sighted in vision, and things look dim and dark oftentimes. The brilliant actor of the Reformation thought it a dark day for himself and the world when his companion and a fellow-laborer seemed about ready to enter this door, for he thought of a world lying in wickedness; of the lamps he was preparing for the night of ignorance; of the bondage of human souls, and the strength of the chains which bound them; and he wanted just such a helper in the work of illumination and emancipation. "Trouble me not," said he, who had caught an inside glimpse. But prayer prevailed; the uplifted latch was dropped, and the Christian hero returned to gather more laurels for his King, so that when he finally went in he carried a richer garland to lay upon the altar before the "great white throne."

We see many pages in history that bear mysterious records; that tell how kingdoms and governments suffer because Death removes men who love equity and justice, while he passeth by

the unjust and tyrannical ; because thrones have lost excellent judges, and retained "the haters of mankind."

But these apparently doleful changes, these fearful and wide-spread desolations, are very much modified when we come to adopt the language of a sorrowing, yet a Christian and submissive heart, at the departure of a loved and needed friend : "O Death ! thou hast bereft us, but thou dost only execute the commission of a higher Power ;" that Power which is pledged for the safety and ultimate triumph of the good cause in the world. Then let Death ride abroad through the earth : he goes and comes at the divine bidding, subserves the divine purposes, and fulfils the mandate of the heavenly King. He is God's messenger, and is sent whithersoever He will, without explaining the reason why.

All marvelled greatly when he sent it to the early missionary band, who had gone far over the seas to win souls to Jesus, singling out a devoted spirit before the work was begun ; and when, little later, one after another slept before they had prepared the ground for the seed. It seemed mysterious, and it will retain somewhat of its mystery until all "secrets shall be revealed ;" but even now we see how their ashes have power to quicken ; how that, though dead, they speak effectually to promote the cause they loved. The dead who lie far off on rock-bound shores, or on sunny plains, who met the Destroyer, and fell before him, while engaged in the godlike work of reclaiming a lost world, are still furthering the object by their significant silence. "Come thou, expressive Silence, muse his praise," said the poet, when his spirit was too full of the beauty and loveliness of nature for utterance. But there is no silence like that of the holy dead to teach men wisdom, and lead to the unutterable.

We wonder in a thousand instances that Death is sent just where he is ; that he breaks so many bright links in household chains, that he takes the fairest, as if he delighted to people the tomb with such ; that he takes the brightest and best, as if he

exulted in his power to quench the light of lustrous eyes and blight the opening buds of virtue that promise so much ; that he removes so many plants before they have unfolded themselves to the watchful eye of the nursery guardians ; so many flowers before they blossom, and so many trees just as they begin to bear fruit. We are filled with amazement at the invasion of a charming circle, and ask why the blow could not have been spared and the sorrow averted. . We see whole families removed, many broken households, many who have lost their "angels," who have seen them go to the Reaper's home on high ; we see the child torn from its mother's bosom, the father from his group of little ones, a chosen companion from the doting heart, and brothers and sisters weeping for those they have loved. There is scarce a fireside where the strange visitant hath not been, but a few where we cannot find those who have not a story to tell of the way they received the call, and what a change it made in their homes, — in their joys and hopes, — even in the world itself, for them. Ah !

" There is a Reaper whose name is Death,
And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between."

These must be given up ; but when Faith takes us by the hand, and whispers that for the "Lord of Paradise" he binds them in his sheaves, — that the flowers "shall all bloom in fields of light," and that circles shall be united again, to remain perfect and true forever, — it is then that our wonder ceases, our amazement grows less, and our sorrow is no more hopeless and crushing. Death, indeed, will awaken sighs wherever and whenever he takes those that are loved. It will always be so in time. "Tears befit earth's partings." They cannot be withheld, and the hallowed drops which Jesus shed are a divine warrant for their indulgence.

When we think there is another world where the pure and good may act, another sphere in which they may still work

right, and that more perfectly than they ever could do on earth, then we do not think it so strange that here and there, from Christian ranks, are taken the best and most devoted. When God bids Death to go and gather such, we mourn, but He writes, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." "They enter into rest," they are infinite gainers, and we may not be losers if thereby we are stimulated to more perfect confidence in Him who alone can wisely plan the world's regeneration, or who knows better than man what will accomplish it.

God overrules all things for good, though we may not see it. Wonders of love will burst upon the disembodied spirit as it mounts to Paradise, or as it sees displayed before it the way through which the Lord hath led it in the world from which death brought it. When immortal shall take the place of these mortal perceptions, who can describe the blessed vividness that will surround everything? The clear vision, the new relations, who shall tell the joy inspired by these things? Christ hath purchased joys that none can understand while they are in the body. They are purely spiritual, and cannot be fully appreciated until every vestige of the mortal is removed. Why then should we so much fear to be "unclothed," when we may find it so much richer to be "clothed upon" with the garments a Saviour hath provided, — when we may so freely use those robes made after a divine pattern, which we have been told are expressly for our benefit?

Death is fearful, only as sin hath made it. If we call it a physical and moral evil, it is because sin hath made it so. Now it is "through much tribulation" that we can find entrance into the kingdom, — through much suffering that the spirit is perfected. Death has various ways of doing its work; at one time it employs the lightning's flash, and anon a lingering disease, taking down the earthly house so gradually that ere the soul is hardly aware, it is gone. It stalks forth on the watery waste to meet the ship that is freighted with human souls, and sends hundreds at once to their ocean

bed and their last account. Sometimes it threatens men, — the poor and the rich, the peasant and the prince, — but delays long the fatal blow.

One has said that "Diseases are a gang of foreign invaders which have broken into the house of life, or rather which have come in through the rents that the inmates themselves had made;" but of this one thing we are assured by revelation, that there can be no more suffering and tribulation than God sees fit, or judges necessary, for the accomplishment of his purposes concerning us, — the perfecting of our spiritual natures.

Death can use no methods but those sanctioned by divine wisdom, nor place his seal upon any one until the time appointed. He has many ministers, but he can give none license to go forth on his work; he can send forth none to fulfil his mission until God gives authority. They may sit in council, but all their deliberations and resolutions are as nothing until he approves and confirms.

"The Court of Death" is the production of an artist who thought of these things, and transferred to canvas his mind's ideal, — an ideal referred to in Bishop Porteus' lines, —

"Deep in a murky cave's recess,
Laved by Oblivion's listless stream, and fenced
By shelving rocks and intermingled horrors
Of yew and cypress shade, from all obtrusion
Of busy noontide beam, the monarch sits
In unsubstantial majesty."

He arose from the perusal of these to portray "Death and his Marshals," — to represent the character and distinctive feature of each, — and many have stood and looked upon the result of his efforts, have seen there the fearful group which Death summons to his aid, and how unrelentingly he presses them into his service. The mighty monarch, coeval with the human race, is seated on a throne — a shroud-covered throne — surrounded by a pall, and on either side are his messengers waiting for his commands. War, Famine, Pestilence, Conflagration,

and Intemperance, all stand with eyes of terrible meaning; Dropsy, Fever, and Consumption are there to speak of penalties, and to point to the speedy consummation of life's work.

None can gaze, and not think that the dreadful group, in dark array, would never have been known if sin had not come into the world; that these hideous forms would never have existed, or even found a place in the brain of poet or artist, if primeval innocence had been maintained.

Notwithstanding this picture hath so much of grief and sadness in it, so much to remind us of the waste and ravages of sin, it yet furnishes a bright spot, that as we gaze kindles the soul into holy rapture, and makes the heart burn within for very joy. The waters of oblivion play around the feet of the terrible king, the head and feet of a prostrate victim touch the cold stream, adding to the general dismay, but just here is observed the radiant eye and beautiful form of Faith, supporting and soothing an aged pilgrim who seems about ready to drop the robe of mortality, and bow willingly to the mandate of Him who sits upon the throne, since the sentence, he considers, started from his loving Lord, whom he hastens to meet, and whom, Faith assures him, will welcome him home.

So Death and all his messengers may meet us in the way; for it is no mere vision, no illusion of the imagination, but a reality: yet, cheered and comforted by Faith, we may go all the way down to the dark valley, yes! through all its windings, with rejoicing spirits, discerning light at the end, and exulting in the reward and the prospect.

"The death which God ordains," says one, "is different from that which man makes. It is a stage in human progress to be passed, as we would pass from childhood to youth, or from youth to manhood, with the same consciousness of an ever-unfolding nature, and, under healthful conditions, as peacefully too; for our souls would be full of the future, ever waiting to break into new life, but never thinking of death and decay. Immortality would not come upon us by surprise, but as man-

hood comes upon youth, as childhood comes upon infancy, or as the day comes upon darkness, melting away the bars of night in soft surges of golden fire. As the heavenly nature was unfolded, the earthly nature would fall away of itself, and so we should grow into our immortality ; for the man would grow into the angel, as the infant grows into the child. How pleasing the sight ! the generations following each other in unbroken ranks, youth treading on the steps of manhood, and manhood on the steps of age, no foe lurking in ambush to thin their ranks, and strew the way with the corpses of the young, but all moving on in charmed numbers to where the ranks of age disappear together, melting out of sight over the summits of the hill, their locks tinged and their features kindled in a light that streams from the country beyond."

Something like to this arises in our minds when we read "the Preacher's" description of "man," as he "goeth to his long home," and we think of the loosening of the "silver cord," and the breaking of the "golden bowl;" of the "pitcher," and the "wheel" at the "fountain," and the "cistern," but when we come to actual experience, we find with all this poetry there is much of stern and sad reality occasioned by conflicts with sin, and that the way home is more difficult and thorny than it was meant to be. The shrinking from dissolution which nature feels is the result of sin. While we possess tainted natures, we must have different feelings from those consequent upon sinless lives and actions, upon perfect innocence, such as our first parents knew in their guiltless days. But "as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," so through one, even Christ, a way has been opened — a highway, where Death may be met and vanquished ; a way with a gate at the end, and to those who have the king's certificate the porter openeth, disclosing mansions of everlasting bliss, where there is "no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor any such thing." Death may do his work upon earth, he may cut heartstrings, probe sensitive souls, desolate firesides, and send mourning and

woe through the land, but he cannot enter the New Jerusalem, he cannot invade the joyous circles there. The blessed ranks in that kingdom will always remain the same undiminished host, never to be thinned or weakened, for no Destroyer goes up and down those more than sunbright plains.

No more death ! How bleeding and mourning hearts rejoice in the anticipation of such a state, and how their hearts melt in grateful emotion toward Him "who led captivity captive," who triumphed over the foe, enabling his followers to say in the last hour, "O Death ! where is thy sting ?" "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"What is it to die ?" says the author of "the Better Land." "To believers, it is to drop the body of this death, and to put on a joyous immortality ; to pass from darkness to everlasting sunlight ; to cease dreaming, and commence a waking existence ; yes, to awake in the likeness of God, satisfied, fully and forever satisfied."

What is it to die ? To feel the last pang, to shed the last tear, to raise the shield of faith against Satan's last dart ? It is to go home to God ; to open the eyes on the enthroned Mediator ; to close the ears upon all discords, all sounds of woe, all the falsehoods, the maledictions, the blasphemies of earth, and open them to the harmonies of heaven. What is it to die ? It is to stop sinning, to cease grieving the spirit and grieving the Saviour ; to close up the inconsistencies of terrestrial probation, and commence a forever blameless life in bliss. What is it to die ? To lean on the Almighty for a few steps down a narrow valley ; to step out of Jordan upon the borders of the better land ; to pass up to the New Jerusalem ; to enter by one of those gates of pearl into the city ; to have ten thousand angels come and utter their cordial welcome ; to see — O, let me die the death of the righteous ! — to see the Saviour smile benignantly, and to hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord !" This it is, to die.

No wonder the dying saint exclaimed "Blessed dying!" since the prospect is so glorious. No wonder that Hall, as he "passed through glory's morning gate," shouted "Glory! Glory!" as he went; and that Janeway found no language to express the emotions of his exultant soul when it was nearing the Paradise above.

No wonder that Christians call the day of death "the last, the best birthday;" that their impatient spirits sometimes cry, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly," and change this hope to full fruition — to pure, perfect, and joyous experience. Thus does the Christian triumph as he returns to dust this earthly frame; but

"no terrestrial balm
Nature's dissolving agony could calm."

It is divine grace that robs the "king" of his "terrors," and makes the meeting one of gladness—the day of final adieu to weariness and sadness, to conflict and sin. Then it will not be thought strange that we pronounce that a happy day,

"When the heaven-sick soul is stealing away."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GRAVE.

Grave faithful to its Trust. — Associations of Jesus' Grave. — Voice issuing from it. — The Grave as regarded by heathen and unchristian Nations. — Christian Views. — As a Home. — A Harbor. — A Resting-Place. — As the Threshold of Heaven.

"There is a calm for those who weep,

A rest for weary pilgrims found:

They softly lie, and sweetly sleep,

Low in the ground." — *Montgomery.*

"O, the grave! the grave! what a place for meditation." — *Irving.*

WHEN the poet-soul had grateful thoughts of the "rest" and the "calm" of the grave, he had in mind only those "pilgrims" whom Faith had conducted down the valley, and whose expiring eyes had kindled with the holy rapture of gospel hopes. Such only can "softly lie and sweetly sleep." The pillow and the couch which the grave offers to such afford the most delightful repose; it is the

"blessed sleep,

From which none ever wake to weep," —

the dreamless state, which is never disturbed by troublesome visions and dark fancies, and the "bed" which "Jesus hath blessed" and made easy. It is called the *narrow house* — the one "appointed for all living," where those of all ages and conditions meet on a common level, forming a vast assembly through which universal silence reigns — silence how impressive! We ask the mighty throng to tell us the secrets of the grave, and we hear a voice, but not from them, saying, "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."

It is an end of mortality — of all things pertaining to this life. It may be the last, secure retreat, where the storms and tempests of earth may beat all unheeded over our silent rest; the resting-place after having passed "through sorrow's night and danger's path," with weary, anxious gaze, and the peaceful haven after a restless and wave-tossed voyage.

It is a quiet home; no leaving it until the resurrection morning, and then the tenants shall come forth from their long-inhabited dwellings where the dust and mould of ages had collected; — the antediluvians from the virgin soil, patriarchs from Machpelah's hold, Moses from his lonely mountain grave, David from the place where his flesh had rested in hope, apostles and martyrs from their heights or depths, missionaries from their sea-girt places of rest, ransomed heathen from their lowly abodes, and a vast company who had found their everlasting retirement in ocean deep, on scorching plains, or more favored recess.

What has been committed to its trust the grave will faithfully keep until that day when all shall be called forth from their chambers, and in one vast procession move to meet the Lord in the brightness of his coming, the glory of his power. The dust which he has guarded with such tender interest will then take on a glorified form, and be to the everlasting praise of the infinite Redeemer, who hath made death and the grave far less to be dreaded; yea, even to be desired, since they are but as the portal to an immortal land — the threshold over which one may step into heaven's room of magnificent proportion. When his crucified body was lovingly borne to the sepulchre in the garden, and that tomb "wherein never man was laid" was hallowed by his sacred touch, there went forth a holy light to hover around the precincts of the grave, and pour divine illumination upon every spot where the ashes of man were found. What a place was that where Jesus was laid! How the hearts of his disciples — of his weeping, sorrowing ones — centred there! Thither their willing feet tended at



The Marys at the tomb of Christ

"break of day," and there their love kept them watching, in spite of wicked sentinels and designing priests. Guards and stony seals might be multiplied, but what were these before that power they had so often seen exercised by Him whom the rocks held in a temporary embrace? There they sat "over against" the sepulchre, musing and mourning until the angels, with radiant countenances, came down to tell them the sacred sleeper had arisen and gone abroad to his work. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," was the cheering invitation of the heavenly visitant; and what a delightful moment was that to the fearful but rejoicing Marys, when they saw the grave spoiled of its victim, their blessed Lord having triumphed, "victorious over all"!

The joys and hopes which animated them in the garden so many centuries ago, still gladden and inspire the followers of Jesus. Delight and gratitude overflowed their hearts at the intelligence of a powerless grave and a risen Redeemer. And so the garden and the sepulchre have been rich in association and promise to Christian disciples ever since. They have met the cold embrace of death, and looked into their silent house without fear; for they remember how Jesus burst the tomb and ascended to glory, and how he said, "I go to prepare a place for you." They seem to hear his voice, assuring them, "You may die, but death shall not harm your spirits; you may be laid in the grave, but it cannot confine the powers of your being to earth, it cannot imprison the soul, nor fetter and cramp it. The tomb is for the body, and the body for the tomb; but as I have risen, so your souls shall arise, to live and act with me."

But is this view of the grave the view of all mankind? Were we asked of everything pertaining to the grave, — of its power, its promise, its darkness or its light, and required to give a comprehensive answer, — one that would be fully and perfectly satisfactory, we should say — JESUS.

In him is centred the light of life, and the light of death

From him emanate the only rays which have power to gild the tomb. He is the only sun that shines into the chambers of the dead, and consequently the only one that can disperse the gloom and the darkness which surround them. Those chambers have shutters which none but he can open; they have springs that none but he can touch; and opening, he reveals what none other but himself can show. The walls are inscribed with meaning sentences that none but he can interpret; the floors are covered with a fabric of glorious texture which he hath wrought, of rich material that needs just the peculiar shade of light he knows how to let fall upon it, to show its richness and its beauty.

The couches are hung with canopies that touch the skies, and fall in protecting folds about the sleepers — his guests, for whom he has made such special provision.

It follows, then, that those who have never heard of Jesus cannot have a right nor cheerful view of the grave.

There is no one to unlock the house for them, no one to show them on what a foundation it stands, to tell them of its substantial basis, or to conduct them to where the life-giving sentences appear, and where the soft couches are spread.

The grave, to people and nations without the true knowledge, is a dark and uncertain place. All their visits to it, and all their associations with it, are forbidding and unpleasant.

When the Mahometans place a friend upon his earthy pillow, for his everlasting rest, they believe him to be visited by Monker and Nakir, two black, livid angels, of terrific appearance, whose mission is to examine the new comer to the shades concerning his faith in the Koran, according to the measure of which depends the character of the sentence they pronounce. If one of the faithful, they believe his body to be refreshed with the air of Paradise, which courses in some unseen way through the narrow apartment assigned him; if unfaithful, it resounds with the cries of anguish that are wrung from him by heavy and repeated strokes from the examiners. This being

done, the earth is pressed upon the lifeless form, and it is left, with the expectation of fearful experience, with a multiplicity of dragons, until the morning of resurrection.

How unlike this to the grave we visit with our Jesus ! What a contrast between the piteous howls, as they pile the cold clods upon the senseless ones, and the hopeful committal the Christian makes ! between their piercing screams and the chastened grief of those whom the divine Hand sustains when the tomb unveils its bosom, and takes to its trust the loveliest and dearest of treasures !

Libations are poured out upon the graves of the Chinese ; perfumed candles send forth a sickly glare, as if struggling to light the spot ; flags wave in the breeze that sweeps by ; figures of men, clothes, and horses, cut from paper, are burned upon the place of the dead, in the firm persuasion that the objects thereby represented will attend him into the other world. Tents are erected ; meats offered to the memory of the departed ; eulogies pronounced, followed by prostration upon the grave, in profound silence ; and the company disperse, a band of wretched ones, though they know it not.

Other nations convey their dead to their homes, with presents of various weapons, provision, and garments ; horses, and other animals, for their comfort, convenience, or actual necessity in the long journey upon which they have set out from the grave's border, or for their entertainment while shut out from their friends in their earthy prison-house.

Similar to this has been the custom of the Araucanians, a Chilian band of courage and enterprise, but ignorant, especially in sacred things. Fearing that the soul may return to its earthly abode, and begin a new order of things, the way to the tomb is strewed with ashes,—an act considered of so much power and merit as to prevent the unwelcome visit, and deter the startled resurrection. Satisfied that the soul is fully bent on its future journey, and that much will still be requisite for its maintenance and guidance, they deposit what

they deem necessary or desirable in the grave, and depart, with many wishes for a safe and happy transport to the world of spirits.

Dancings and feastings are strangely mingled with all their funeral rites, for the significance of the change which death has wrought, and the prescribed power of the grave, are all a mystery to them. They and all untaught nations know that a spoiler is among them. They need not be told of this, for they witness his ravages, and are not uninfluenced by the blight which falls upon themselves and others; but when they come to look down into the open grave, they see not the ladder which Christian faith has constructed and planted, whereon ascending and descending angels are seen intent upon their ministries of love to human spirits upon earth, or gently bearing those upward who have left the world. It is faith that illumines the grave — that robs it of its gloom.

In a picture of grief, alluding to the Greeks, are these words: —

“A wail was heard around the bed, the death-bed of the young;
Amidst her tears the funeral chant a mournful mother sung,” —

sung words indicative of despair and hopeless sorrow. And why? Because the grave claimed the son of her hopes, the pride of her heart, and it was accounted an end. There have always been “mourning mothers” to sing in sorrow of heart for ended hopes and joys over early graves; but there is an element in the songs of Christian nations that is all unknown to others. There is a strain that goes deeper down into the soul, and by its soothing melody eases the aching, wounded spirit as nothing else can. There are notes of richer and more gladsome sound, that make the anthem instead of the dirge, and soft, sweet harmonies where otherwise would be only loud and noisy lamentation.

Those who have never heard these tunes upon the gospel harp can never know the power of the heavenly music — its power to subdue and comfort, to quell anguish, especially that

which arises when the grave opens. A lighted sepulchre is not a merely figurative thing with us. What was it to many people in the past? Let the sickly glare of their melting tapers answer.

There is a sense in which these laid far more than we in the dark bosom of the earth, for "their gems were lost in ashes." Ours is a loftier faith, and we see light where all to them is darkness. The spirit-jewels are not lost to us, but only gathered to be kept; and when we give them up it is with this reflection — the Jeweller in heaven will take care of them; they shall yet reappear to our gaze, clear and transparent, or less lustrous, as they merit. The grave with us, as with them, is a receptacle for the lifeless, worn-out body; but when we carefully deposit our treasures there, we may thank God there are so many other associations connected with it to make it pleasant and hopeful. What is the grave to the Christian?

It is a *home*.

"I long to be laid in the grave, for it will be my silent and peaceful home," said one; and who was it that gave utterance to such desires? We might suppose such language not inappropriate to the tired pilgrim who had seen much of trial, who had seen one after another go out from his circle until its charm was gone and the happy home desolate, and there was no place left for the heart to stay. When the loved and loving are buried, living hearts go too to the burial; and if they are not entombed, they linger there to keep ceaseless vigils with the dead, until memory dies out, or death calls them away. These graveyard lingerings put a new aspect upon the world, and it is not very strange that those who have experienced multiplied strokes should grow weary, and think of a peaceful home; but it was not such that breathed this longing. Life was never spread out in fairer prospect to any one than to her, when the "pale finger" of consumption beckoned her to go. Hope never beamed so brightly upon her pathway as then. The wealth of her young heart was given, and an equal legacy

was hers in return; and anticipation was busy in dreams of coming happiness. Could this be resigned for the grave, and all the rich and blessed associations of home? The grave should be a home—a silent and peaceful one, where no sorrow should come, no anxiety should disturb.

She died, and was carried to her quiet home. Loving hands adorned it with flowers, and made it pleasant to look upon; then turning away, thought of her as roaming through beautiful streets and glorious mansions, realizing all the bliss of a perfect home continually. It was a brief and happy period she spent on earth; and many others, of kindred spirit, have hailed the opening grave as the reception into a congenial home—a home for the weary body—while the spirit flies afar in exultant liberty.

In how many instances has the sentence trembled on the lips of dying saints, "I am almost home; I shall rest in the grave!" "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest."

The grave is also called a "peaceful harbor." When the mariner has been long tossed on a tempestuous ocean, subject to constant agitation, and threatened by the ever-recurring storm, none can tell with what an intense thrill of delight he welcomes the hour when he can drop anchor in a safe and quiet harbor.

Rocks, shoals, and breakers, waves and billows, are all forgotten then; so, as the Christian lies down in his narrow berth, he is at rest, for the anchor is secure, the ship safe; past dangers are all unheeded, and he rejoices in having reached the port of peace.

The ocean of life is often very rough—stirred by many tempests. If we go up to the heights, we as often go down into the depths, until so weary with the struggles and tossings, we sigh for some place where they will be at an end. Oftentimes the darkness is great, and no light appears on all the dreary waste, and we cry, in earnestness of spirit,—

"O, show us a star for the tempest-tost ranger,
A lighthouse, a beacon, to point out the danger;
O, bring us a Pilot to guide us safe through,
That never will leave us till the port is in view."

When Faith and Hope come in answer, sending their beams athwart the gloom, they point to the grave, saying, Ye are nearing that harbor — 'tis a harbor of peace; though for a time the waters be turbid and angry, at the end they are as smooth as glass, and as clear as crystal.

"The grave is a resting-place."

How sweetly *repose* and *rest* sound to those who have borne the burden and heat of the day, the fatigue and weariness of toil and suffering! To the invalid, tossed upon a couch of pain, counting the slow march of hours through sleepless days and nights, the thought of rest revives fainting courage, and lessens the severity of protracted disease. "The rest of the grave will be all the sweeter," was the comforting assurance whispered in the ears of a sufferer — one who had known for many years the various tortures that come through a disordered nervous organization. His eye kindled with holy animation as he replied, "I know there will be no rest for my poor body until it reaches the grave: but when I consider that that is forever undisturbed, the suffering which must intervene vanishes away, and seems as nothing, though indeed it be manifold."

A few years ago a class of young ladies went forth from a seminary, to commence their life-work in the Lord's vineyard, with the thrilling motto inscribed upon gold, and more imperishably upon their hearts, "Our rest is above." They went forth to endure, to battle, to encounter hardship and privation in various forms; but amid all, there was ever to be the delightful anticipation of the *rest above*.

Through the grave is the path to the "*above*." They were to keep their weapons bright, and maintain a ceaseless conflict, seeking no rest, and expecting none, until this goal was reached, until the path was opened that led to the place of reward — the blessed rest in heaven.

The character of our earthly discipline may be such, and often is such, as to try and task every energy of being, to stretch continually every fibre of the soul with most painful tension; and what could sustain the spirit under its peculiar burdens but the consideration of coming rest?

The heart would often sink, and the spirit faint, under the accumulated woes of time, were it not for the hope of the "rest that remaineth" when the duties of life are all done. At the end of the race the burdens are all laid down; and the thought encourages the burdened pilgrim to toil and struggle on until the time to lay his garments by, "upon his bed to rest;" until

"Beyond the confines of the tomb
Appears the dawn of heaven."

The grave is indeed a resting-place to the Christian—a painless couch, upon which he lies down to a more blissful repose than he has ever known or conceived, even in his best ideals of rest. Wrapped in the drapery of death, he may lie silently, but peacefully; and those who frequent the place need not "tread softly," for no mortal footstep can ever disturb the sleeper in the grave. It is profound slumber there; and to those who know not Jesus, who see not a loving one in Him who gathers and watches over the dead, it is not strange that the grave seems a "mysterious realm," a land of shades, of silence and forgetfulness, to be put out of mind by the living, and to shrink from in dying.

Home, rest, and peace are only associated with the grave when it is viewed as a vestibule to heaven; when it is looked upon only as the body's place, since other springs must be touched before can be discovered the residence of the soul. Death is a

"stupendous change:
There lies the soulless clod.
The Sun eternal breaks,
The new immortal wakes —
Wakes with his God!"

There is no sleep so deep as that upon the lap of earth. Once pillowed upon its cold bosom, and surrounded by its all-embracing arms, there is no change. It is a long and dreamless sleep; but nestling child upon its mother's bosom never laid its head down more confidently than does the trusting Christian, when his loving Lord spreads a covering for his weary body, and draws his spirit to his own arms, there to find all his tears dried and his sorrows hushed by the soothing voice of his heavenly Guardian.

We visit the place of the dead — the place of graves, and we are sad. We plant the cypress, the yew, and the willow, all indicative of grief and mourning; and while we stand in the shade, we say, Alas that they were called away! that they must be silent and alone in their narrow homes! We go about with downcast countenances and subdued voices, thinking that in all the world there is no place like the grave for sorrow of heart; that there is nothing so relentless, so cruel, as the eager earth, which continually says, Give me your treasures; they belong to me, and I claim mine own.

We see one after another go to the company that congregate in the silent halls; we fall in with the slow and solemn procession that attends them to the door, and our tearful sighs and reluctant farewells show how we regard their death. We would not have them go; we would not have them lone tenants of the tomb; we would fain linger, and watch like so many sentinels to guard the dust. But is this meet for the Christian? Are these the appropriate thoughts, the right feelings to be cherished, while standing by the tomb, that unveils its bosom for the reception of the faithful — those who only pass through the grave to their home in the skies? There will never be any more "cares to break their long repose," nothing to disturb its perfect serenity; and to rejoice with them in the final termination of every conflict would seem more fit than the indulgence of selfish and uncontrollable grief.

A bereaved widow, in sable robes, bent over the grave of her

youthful husband, musing thus : " Here lies all that I love. O that I could lie down too with the insensible, the unconscious, and forget all my anguish ! " But is this the spirit with which we should visit such places ?

It has been often said that " Jesus wept " at the grave of Lazarus. But who can tell what were the emotions of our divine and compassionate Lord in that moment ? There was no selfishness, it is true, in those tears. We may weep at the grave, and be better for it ; but when grief is unsealed to foster the unfitting lamentations of questionable submission, it wears a channel for streams of bitterness to pour in upon the soul with devastating power. The grave should be a place to inspire high and holy purposes, to beget pure and benevolent desire, and to insure rapid preparation for the fulfilment of our mission which remains on this side. If there are altars to be built, and sacrifices to be made, we should turn from these places to prepare the wood and kindle the fires, in more strict obedience to the divine calls. Then, when we iterate our oft-repeated acknowledgment, I am going to the grave, we shall do it with less of despondency in our tones, and less of shrinking in our hearts, for the halo that circles a well-filled life will arch the grave's entrance with light and beauty.

The cemeteries of the present day are places of loveliness. Such they should be. Take Nature's choicest spots ; let the fountains murmur and the rivulets sparkle ; let the green valley and the shaded hill-top mingle in the scene ; bring flowers of rarest, loveliest form, and let them blossom all along the borders around the quiet home of the dead, for it makes us think of the " green pastures," the " crystal stream," and the fadeless flowers of which we have been told as belonging to Paradise — that place where the happy dead have gone. •

At Greenwood, that place where lie so many dead, and where gather so many loving hearts, there is a magnificent gateway, or entrance, at which stands a porter mindful of those who seek admittance there. Who can enter and not think of another

porter and another gate? of another entrance more sublimely grand and more intensely solemn than all others? Those who pass through this may never come out, while those who have a passport there may wander through the "dim aisles" and return.

Death is the porter at one gateway, and pointing at the rising monuments on the hills and the valleys, he says, Go read what they say, and remember that "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This is the language of the graveyard. This is the conviction that always forces itself home upon the soul whenever we visit these silent abodes that Death has peopled; yet we say, "Bring flowers" and strew them all along, and perchance they may take root in this dust, and bloom to the praise of Him who caused immortal hopes to bud and blossom around the grave.

"Make my grave an attractive spot," said one, "for I would have it a place of happy teaching;" and such it should be, such it will be, if the sleeper rests in Jesus; for "he being dead, yet speaketh."

"Who will go with me into the dark grave?" said a lisping child, who was passing away, to her weeping parents: "will you go, papa? will you go, mamma?" And when they told her it could not be, tears fell upon the wan cheek of the little sufferer; but in a little time smiles chased the tears, for she said, "I have asked Jesus, and he has promised to go. Farewell, father; farewell, mother: the grave is not dark now." It is this that gives blessedness to all experience, that enables so many to go to the grave so full of hope and confidence, even anticipation; for they meet Jesus, and he conducts them through. No wonder that the good Dr. Bonar talked thus of the "little while," as he considered these things:—

"Beyond the smiling and the weeping

I shall be soon;

Beyond the waking and the sleeping,

Beyond the sowing and the reaping,

I shall be soon.

Love, rest, and home!

Sweet home!

Lord, tarry not, but come.

"Beyond the blooming and the fading

I shall be soon ;

Beyond the shining and the shading,

Beyond the hoping and the dreading,

I shall be soon.

Love, rest, and home !

Sweet home !

Lord, tarry not, but come.

"Beyond the rising and the setting

I shall be soon ;

Beyond the calming and the fretting,

Beyond remembering and forgetting,

I shall be soon.

Love, rest, and home !

Sweet home !

Lord, tarry not, but come.

"Beyond the parting and the meeting

I shall be soon ;

Beyond the farewell and the greeting,

Beyond the pulse's fever beating,

I shall be soon.

Love, rest, and home !

Sweet home !

Lord, tarry not, but come.

"Beyond the frost-chain and the fever

I shall be soon ;

Beyond the rock waste and the river,

Beyond the ever and the never,

I shall be soon.

Love, rest, and home !

Sweet home !

Lord, tarry not, but come."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RESURRECTION.

Life's Epochs. — Insufficiency of Human Philosophy. — Analogy of Nature. — Scripture Declarations. — Christ's Resurrection a Pledge to Believers. — Whately's Opinion. — Thompson's. — Bible Evidence sufficient. — Souls will sparkle as Gems in the Redeemer's Crown at the Last.

“ Shall I be left abandoned in the dust,
 When fate, relenting, lets the flower revive?
 Shall Nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
 Deny him, doomed to perish, hope to live?
 Is it for this fair virtue oft must strive
 With disappointment, penury, and pain?
 No; heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive,
 And man's majestic beauty bloom again,
 Bright through the eternal year of love's triumphant reign.” — *Beattie*.

It has been said there are “four grand epochs” in the history of every renewed soul, of every sinner saved by grace — the first, the hour of natural birth, when he opened his eyes upon this world, to commence a career that should run on eternally; the second, the time of blessed consecration, when a vital union is established between the penitent spirit and a forgiving Saviour; the third, the hour of death, the close of probation, when soul and body are separated for a season, the one to return to the earth as it was, the other unto God who gave it, free from sin, and ready for glory; and the last, that of resurrection, which consummates the whole. The highest style of sublimity is stamped upon all this; for a glorious Being hath wrought the pattern, and he works as none other can work. Such a fitting process none other ever did institute, or ever will. To the angels it is a mystery. The highest

intelligences of heaven look down with adoring wonder upon these epochs in human history, and cannot understand how every blessing should culminate in redemption for erring, apostate man, why so much of grandeur should be associated with the fallen race. It is a marvellous thing, and exalts infinitely above all conception the character of Him who planned and executed the great scheme, and spread it out for the delighted gaze of men and angels through all eternity.

But of all these periods, the last, — the grand finale in man's history, — the resurrection, has more of mystery to us than any other. We see opening life, and watch its developments, without pausing to consider that there is anything very wonderful in this. It seems more natural than otherwise that the soul, while ruminating upon its origin and its destiny, should turn itself to its Divine Source, and yield itself in love and homage to Him who made it. It does not seem strange to us that the body should succumb to the power of disease, and meet decay. We see death do its work, now slowly and silently, and again suddenly. It is the lot of all; we see this and we know it. We see the mortal part laid in the grave, but the immortal is out of sight. We cannot follow it to know aught that befalls it. An impenetrable veil is drawn over all, that the keenest vision cannot pierce. The natural eye cannot discern the faintest outline of that landscape which opens before the spirit set free from earth; but how does it affect the spirit? No voice has ever come back to tell us; and indeed, if there had, we doubt if the dialect would have been intelligible to mortal ears, or if the emotions of such a one could be symbolized by any words that our language affords. The dead have passed into another sphere, and all things are new. The medium of communication is new, and the things to be communicated are also new. The spirit relations cannot be measured or defined by any in this life, and there is no vehicle of expression with mortals, no avenue through which may be conveyed sight or sound; so that there must ever remain the

most profound ignorance of what happens to the spirit after the dissolution of the body, until we come to that revelation which He who came from heaven has brought for the purpose of giving light to the grave, and all that comes after. No merely human philosophy would have conceived the idea of a resurrection. It might have conceived immortality sooner; might have made a higher style of life to be the result of death, as the pagan philosophers of antiquity often attempted.

It might have speculated upon the elements and capacity of spirit, and theorized upon future probabilities, until some sort of system was wrought out that would attract the novelty-loving mind; but, after all, it would be but baseless theory, that would never abide the test which the earnest spirit is ever inclined to apply.

"How can the dead be raised up?" is a question that philosophy cannot answer, unless it be that philosophy which came down from God out of heaven. That alone is adequate for a satisfactory reply. Nature indeed hath analogies. In more than one instance she betokens a rising again; but who could determine between the seeming resemblances and the actual? Who could tell with a certainty whether the natural signified anything of the spiritual, — whether the finger that points to the result be in the right direction or not? Thousands of little creatures become immured in their self-made graves, and eventually emerge to a new and more brilliant existence; they leave their grovelling position on the earth to mount and fly in the air; but who ever found this the door through which a clear insight into the mysteries of the resurrection was obtained?

It may be an easy thing to imagine that man, so much nobler and better, possessing a soul "pregnant with celestial fire," should find this part of his being arising to some proportionate existence; but who would dream that the inanimate form committed to the grave could ever arise and come forth, beautiful and glorified, unless the thought came from some divine and well-authenticated revelation?

The teachings of Nature in this, as in some other points we have noticed, are interesting so far as they go. We find beautiful types, but those things which are shadowed forth are always dim and indistinct, until we come into the transparent atmosphere of that Word which reveals them in clear perspective. It is difficult, perhaps, to tell how much we might have learned from the former, since our ideas have always been gratefully associated with the latter; but we cannot be too careful in referring all important questions to the decisions of unerring Wisdom. If Nature fails, Scripture cannot; but, since both have the same Author, we find that one but confirms the other, though, as compared, one is darkness and the other light.

The insect resurrection, already alluded to, is supposed to typify the human being—its terrestrial form, apparent death, and ultimate celestial destination. "And it seems much more extraordinary," says Robert Boyle, "that a sordid and crawling worm should become a beautiful and active fly—that an inhabitant of the dark and fetid dunghill should, in an instant, entirely change its form, rise into the blue air, and enjoy the sunbeams—than that a being whose pursuits have been after truth and an undying name, and whose purest happiness has been derived from the acquisition of intellectual power and finite knowledge, should rise hereafter into a state of being where immortality is no longer a name, and ascend to the source of unbounded power and infinite wisdom." Shall the insect burst the "dark chrysalis," and spread its wings exultingly to roam in a new sphere and enjoy a new life, and shall not

"we into new existence spring,
Freed from the fetters of this cumbering clay?
From the dim portals of the silent tomb,
Shall we triumphant rise and soar away,
Leaving the darkness of that land of gloom,
For the bright sunshine of an endless day?"

The highest end must surely be reserved for the noblest part

of creation, and "it doth not yet appear" what man will be when he emerges from the present into the future — when he bursts his mortal coils, and leaves behind the chrysalis of earth. The new and glad career of the butterfly, so far superior to its former state, may shadow forth the path of a bright-winged seraph, mounting to the celestial regions, rejoicing in the ineffable glory of that Sun which fills all heaven with its brightness.

But there are other things in Nature that seem to render a resurrection at least highly probable. We have based strong presumptions of a future life upon the principles of our being, the actions which flow from us, as well as the consideration of things without us. In like manner we may obtain evidence in favor of our present theme.

Every twenty-four hours of our life we behold a revolution amounting to a resurrection. The day opens in brightness and beauty; the sun wheels his chariot in the sky steadily toward the western horizon, riding on until the whole is lost in night, buried in silence and darkness; and what is our pledge that it will ever gladden our earth by its reappearance?

We wait for the voice of the morning to open the grave of darkness, to bid the sun come forth from the chamber whither he had retired, and revivify the dead of night. It comes, but never until the appointed time. In vain the weary watcher at the grave of night may cry, "Arise, O Morning, and disperse the gloom." So many moments must the curtain be down, so many hours must the pall be spread, before they can be lifted for the entrance of new light — the beginning of a new day.

To this *diurnal* resurrection succeeds another — that of the *annual*. As the day dies into night, and is gone from us, so doth the summer fall, a helpless thing, into the icy arms of winter, there to find its certain burial. As the stern monarch approaches to place his seal upon her beautiful form, a chill runs through all her system; she is no longer able to keep

up her wonted vigor, but gradually dies. The garlands she had woven begin to wither, until the hill and the valley, the mossy glade and the woodland dell, have no more a trace of those things she planted there. The grateful odors and the rich perfumes die out, for the fair proprietor is dying, and hath no more power, no more skill for the delicate art. The countless leaves of the forest, that have been as so many strings to the harp the wind hath played, begin to lose their power and fail altogether. That which kept them in tune descends into the roots, and there lies in its own grave. The leaves gather around the spot as so many mourners; the earth puts on its shroud of white, and we stand as it were by one mighty sepulchre, wherein lie buried all the fair and beautiful; but there comes a time, as we are musing, when we are reminded of a new order of things. We see a movement among the things we had called sere and dead; they begin to rise; the plants and flowers peep out of their graves, lay aside the bands which had encircled them, revive, and grow, and flourish; the trees begin to prepare their strings, and all Nature is jubilant, for the time of resurrection has come, and newness of life is the anthem to be sung.

Then the husbandman goeth forth to his work to furnish us with another figure, for "the corn by which we live, and for want of which we perish with famine, is, notwithstanding, cast upon the earth and buried in the ground, with a design that it may corrupt, and, being corrupted, may revive and multiply; our bodies are fed by this constant experiment, and we continue the present life by a succession of resurrections. Thus all things are prepared by corrupting, are preserved by perishing, and revive by dying; and can we think that man, the lord of all these things which thus die and revive for him, should be detained in death as never to live again? Is it imaginable that God should thus restore all things to man, and not restore man to himself? If there were no other consideration but of the principles of human nature, of the liberty and remunerability of

human actions, and of the natural revolutions and resurrections of other creatures, it were abundantly sufficient to render the resurrection of our bodies highly probable."

All these things might incline to the supposition that the inner principle might survive — might live and grow ; that the spiritual might come forth "like the expanding blade, which breaks from the decaying capsule that contained it;" but who could discover any data by which he might reason of the resuscitation of the body? The worm that trails in the dust prepares its own grave, in which to wait its coming transformation ; and when it becomes a released and soaring thing, the tenement it leaves is left to perish, being of no more use ; and who could tell, when the human body is wrapped in the cerements of the tomb, whether it also had not accomplished its end, and would be left and lost in decay? Reason taught the ancients the propriety — the necessity — of awarding immortality to the spiritual substance of man, but they rejected the idea of the resurrection of the body as absurd : their teacher disowned it.

It was not generally believed when Christ came, if indeed there was any proper and rational belief at all. The Sadducees believed that the period intervening between birth and death was the whole of human existence, and that the exclusive province of religion was to keep all things from relapsing into universal chaos — simply, to maintain order. The Pharisees, indeed, professed to hold the doctrine of a resurrection, but not in such a manner as to escape the condemnation of Jesus. It was to be a fundamental doctrine in the system he came to establish, and he only brought the true light and the true knowledge into the world — the only light that was sure for both Pharisee and Sadducee, Jew and Gentile, and all others that would pass on to the resurrection of the just, in every period of time.

This subject particularly assumes its true dignity and rightful proportion only when it is contemplated in the light of the Christian revelation. It is one of its peculiar disclosures.

The sages of the heathen world, as we have said, generally admitted the immortality of the soul; but they failed to discern, in aught that was presented to them, anything that led them to form the most distant conception that bodies would ever be reanimated after being subject to decay in the grave. Hence the Athenian philosophers declared Paul "a babbler," when he stood up to announce the strange truth unto them. All their preconceived notions were against so unlikely a result. How could it be? The leaven that was "to leaven the whole lump" was silently working, and the whole process was to be clearly made known by Jesus, who declared himself "the resurrection and the life," and until then the "could be" was to be revolved and re-revolved in the mind to no purpose.

Jesus came with doctrines different from any that were then taught, and among them was this same doctrine of the resurrection: not that it was unrecognized in the Old Testament, but it was wanting in the power and vitality of a practical truth, affecting the conduct and lives of men in such manner as to draw them more to the future than the present. There had been holy men, ages before Christ, who had received the Christian doctrines by anticipation, as it were — had experienced their power upon the soul; but when Jesus began his mission it was among a people that comprehended not its true nature, that appreciated not his character nor his teachings; yet it seems they could not all have been ignorant of the truth. As they gathered in temples and synagogues to hear the sacred books expounded, to listen to the records of inspired men that had penned great and glorious sentences, had they never heard of the sublime confidence of Job in his sorrow, that led him to break out in the faith-inspired words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another"?

Had the expectations of the Psalmist never been "old? "I

shall behold thy face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." "My flesh shall rest in hope ; for thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave." "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Solomon had given expression to the same truth, and Daniel had asserted that those who sleep in the dust of the earth should awake to receive their merited doom ; but had they heard it all, from which portion would they have derived the assurance of anything more than the resurrection of the soul ? When Job said, "I know" — and David, "I shall be satisfied," they were conscious that there was a mysterious principle within that constituted their personality ; that it was capable of living and acting independent of that extraneous matter they called the body. Death might do its work upon the exterior, but this principle must live — must rise from the tomb, and still reason and love on forever.

The ambition of the Psalmist was only limited by the *forever*. His soul was to expatiate in the boundless love of the Infinite, till this season had run its rounds ; and this was the joy of resurrection. But did his fervid soul know it all when he uttered these rapt exclamations ? Not unless God had revealed unto him what was to be, for complete resurrection was not manifest until Christ came — rather until he died and rose again, becoming "the first fruits of them that slept."

Jesus taught it to Martha, when he told her, in tones that thrilled her very soul, "Thy brother shall rise again ;" but it was never published to the world until that blessed day when he himself rose from the dead — that memorable time when he burst the bands of death, triumphed over it and the grave, and appeared, as it were, a pledge of complete resurrection.

Ah ! that was a blessed revelation the men in "shining garments" were permitted to make when they said, "He is not here ; *he is risen*." What unutterable joy it gave the quickly-informed disciples to know their Lord had arisen ! But the tidings were not only a source of comfort to them, but were

to be such to the whole Christian world — to every soul, down to the latest time, that should feel any interest in prolonging the song of redemption, in living a purer and diviner life. Who can describe that morning — the morning of Christ's resurrection? What hopes were born! what a light was kindled! It illuminated the grave, and poured cheering radiance over the whole destiny of man. The evangelists dwell upon it as a season of "great joy." "The Lord is risen," say they, "and shall not we arise with him?" Did he not tell us, "Because I live, ye shall live also?" What new meaning appeared in his teachings! what beauty, what glory! The same that was opened unto the disciples was shown unto all mankind.

The associations of the resurrection morning are always sacred to the Christian. He passes through death rejoicing in it, and goes to the grave exulting that Jesus will open the prison doors, and let the captives go free; that the time is coming when he will visit their narrow homes, and marshal them in bright array around his throne — a triumphal host, under the glorious banner of Immanuel, forever to hail their Leader as the "resurrection and the life."

"Before Christ no one had come from the grave without again being subject to death; and, as the first fruits are a sample and pledge of the approaching harvest, so our Lord's coming from the grave is the earnest of a like ingathering of his people. His was both type and guaranty of what shall be on the broad scale at their resurrection. His own reappearance from the tomb was the crowning evidence that he is the faithful and true witness, and that each of his promises for the future is as sure of accomplishment as those already fulfilled."

But, more than this, the living, vital union that subsists between true believers and their risen Redeemer warrants the hope, yea, the *assurance*, that they will experience a triumphal awaking from the dust; so that "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."



But what is characteristic of resurrection? "By that event," says one, "we understand the reproduction, at the last day, of the same bodies, formerly occupied, and the reunion of the soul of each saint with his own body, thus raised and glorified. We understand not a new creation, not the calling into existence of a body formed from substances which did not enter into the old; we understand not an indiscriminate occupation of tenements supplied at Christ's summons, but the refitting of the tabernacle of each believer for the everlasting habitation of his own spirit; neither of them was the united whole, having lost its identity."

"It is," says another, "the putting forth at death of new existence, just as the decaying seed puts forth the blade. Its decay is necessary in order to release the life and the beauty that were imprisoned within its foldings. Death and resurrection describe processes, one the inverse of the other, but the former helping on the latter, and preparing its triumphant way. Our future being is insouled and inurned in our present. The spiritual body is included elementally in our present mode of existence, with its perceptive powers all ready for their enlargement. The soul is not a metaphysical nothing, but a heavenly substance and organism, fold within fold. The material falls off, and the spiritual stands forth, and fronts the objects and breathes the ether of immortality. The future is wrapped up within us, and waiting to be unrolled.

"Death will not transfer us; it will only remove a hinderance and a veil. We receive with our present being the germ of all that we are to become hereafter. The physical comes first in the order of development, forming a secure basis for all that is to follow, holding it firm, and relaxing its compressure when its function is done — 'first that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual.' The death of the first is the falling away of exuvial matter, when the life of our life becomes manifest, and the spiritual body unfolds all its powers; — it is, essentially, the immortal man breaking from the carnal investitures

of earth, and thence standing upon a higher platform of existence, and having open relations therewith."

Men with speculative minds forge various opinions upon all Scripture doctrines; and so upon this. Like the Athenians in the apostles' time, they would know how and why these things are so. "How can the dead be raised up, and with what body do they come?" is a question that has been asked in all the ages since the doctrine of a resurrection was first revealed to man. Is it the same that is laid in the grave? is the query of many. Will the same particles of matter that are deposited there be gathered up after decomposition, be reunited and become the same body? According to the discrimination of some, the answer is negative, while others see strong proof for the opposite belief.

Says Whately, in his *Future State*, "Now we know that a plant raised from a seed is a very different thing from the seed it sprung from, both in form and in size, and in most of its properties. The seed itself is completely destroyed as to its structure, and, as chemists call it, decomposed; while the young plant is nourished, and its substance formed, chiefly, at least, from the earth, the air, and the rains, so that if any of the particles of matter which were in the seed remain in the plant when fully grown (which is necessarily a matter of uncertainty), they must bear an immensely small proportion to the whole. We are not, indeed, authorized to conclude that all these circumstances must correspond with what shall take place at the resurrection, merely from the use of this illustration. But Paul himself calls our attention to this very point: 'That which thou sowest is not quickened (i. e. made alive), except it die.'

"Here we have him expressly reminding us that a grain of corn, when sown, dies; that is, is dissolved, and its structure destroyed, never to be restored; which is the very illustration used by our Lord also, in speaking of the same subject: 'Verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the

ground and die, it remaineth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' We are reminded, also, that it is not a plant that is sown, but a seed; and that we raise from it, not the same thing that was sown, but a plant which is very different. 'Thou sowest not that body which shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased him, and to every seed its own body.'

"Let it be remembered, that even for a body to be the same, it is not at all necessary that it should consist of the same particles of matter. Our bodies, we know, are undergoing during life a constant change of substance, from continual waste and continual renewal; and anatomists, who have carefully studied the structure of the human frame, have proved that this perpetual change—this system of constant loss and supply—extends even to the most solid parts of the body, the bones, which, as well as the rest, are gradually worn away and repaired, so that there is every reason to conclude that all the particles of matter which compose our bodies are changed several times during our life; and that no one living body has any particle of the same substance now remaining in it which it had several years ago.

"Why, then, should it be supposed that the same identical particles of matter, which belonged to any one's body at his death, must be brought together at his resurrection in order to make the same body; when, even during his lifetime, the same particles did not remain, but were changed many times over?

"It seems clear enough," says he, "that a man's body is called his from its union with his soul, and the mutual influence of the one on the other; so that, if at the resurrection we are clothed with bodies which we, in this way, perceive to belong to us, and to be ours, it signifies nothing of what particles of bodily substance they are composed."

Says Thompson, in his chapter on the "resurrection body," "The *same* will be raised. Without wasting time in disquisition upon what constitutes identity, or upon the changes which every living creature constantly undergoes, suffice it to say, that, notwithstanding all its mutations, the same body which is born is the same body which dies, and the one which dies is that which will be raised again. It would be deemed irrelevant, in this connection, to discuss abstruse questions relating to substances, atoms, and the like : all that is important, or possible to know, is, that whatever may be essential to identity will be preserved ; so that it is proper to affirm now, and will then be evidently true, that the body which died is the one which will be raised. The translation of Enoch and Elijah, the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, the testimony that they which sleep in their graves shall come forth, indeed all testimony of Holy Writ upon this point, establishes the truth that the body raised is identical with that from which separation took place. The changes that occur at regeneration, departure from the body, and reunion to the same after having been in Paradise, do not affect the identity of the soul ; nor do the revolutions effected by growth, dissolution, and resurrection, destroy the identity of the body ; nor do all these combined impair the identity of the person, when these two elements of his constitution shall have been reunited. Abraham will be forever conscious to himself, and known to his family as the same Abraham who bought the field of Ephron, and the cave which was therein ; the precious dust first deposited there shall come forth, his own beloved Sarah. Samuel J. Mills was not buried irrecoverably, nor has any believer been lost in the ocean. The sea shall ere long give up its dead unharmed. Each saint in Christ Jesus may say, —

' In ocean cave still safe with thee,
The germ of immortality ;
And calm and peaceful is my sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep.' "

The sacred writers have not seen fit to furnish means for the gratification of all curiosity, and in this, as in other instances, man has sought to unclasp and unseal, that, if possible, he might discover the precise data, and himself look into the profound mysteries of the Eternal.

Giving their own coloring, their own form to the glasses through which they look, some observe one phase and some another; one beholds, as he thinks, evidence that things will move in a certain direction, while another reasons upon the probability of an opposite course. Both may be honest and sincere in their views, and their expression of them; both may think they have Scripture to support their ideas; but none can know, until the archangel's trump shall sound, the precise manner of the divine conduct in this respect. It was not necessary that mortals should know definitely the method of procedure in any of God's plans. Is it not enough to know that what is committed to the grave "in corruption" is raised "in incorruption," no more subject to the influences of decay, no more liable to disease and death, but to flourish in immortal youth, and forever to enjoy its life, vigor, and freshness, with no withering, no blight? Is it not enough that what is "sown in weakness" is "raised in power," to remain, in all the future, incapable of exhaustion, fitted in the highest sense to accompany the mind in its loftiest flights and most vigorous activities? Can we not rest with the assurance that what is "sown in dishonor is raised in glory," destined to shine in a splendor similar to that which surrounded the Lord when "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment became white and glistening"?

But if with all this we are not satisfied, can we fail to be, when we consider that it is expressly said that the "natural body" shall be raised a "spiritual body"? Dick defined the latter thus: as "refined to the highest pitch of which matter is susceptible, capable of the most vigorous exertions and of the swiftest movements, endued with organs of perception of a more exquisite and sublime nature than those with which it is now

furnished, and fitted to act as a suitable vehicle for the soul in all its celestial services and sublime investigations," but we can only conjecture what the character of its constitution may be, or what its particular properties and endowments. We have, as it were, the outline of a landscape, while all which goes to make it up is not given. The rocks, hills, trees, flowers, meadows; and valleys are all appropriate objects of the same, but it is the final grouping together of the whole that demands our attention, and calls forth our interest and admiration; so, if we cannot gaze upon everything that goes to make up the sublime doctrine of resurrection, we know it is a glorious truth — a sun in the gospel system, and we may rejoice in the concentrated glory of the same. Because our chemistry will not allow us to analyze every beam that emanates from this source, which is better, to consider it at fault, or to conclude that these beams are a very strange and questionable sort of things? In a certain place we are told of a company who were careful to use the present life, to improve their discipline upon earth, so as to "obtain a better resurrection;" and if, like them, we make it a practical matter, and make all things subservient to the highest end of life, then will all things open upon us in such a way as to fully satisfy the earnest, inquiring soul, remove all doubt, dimness, and anxiety, and substitute a blessed experience of joy. There is no more merciful provision in this world than this — that the scroll of our destiny is unrolled little by little. If the whole were displayed at once, we should be overwhelmed, unfitted entirely for our trials in the future. It is better that we study out our life-chapters in syllables, for the effort makes us better students in the school where we are placed. God has deemed it wise to withhold revelations of particulars from every soul, though men are eager to see and know. We may theorize about infinitesimal particles of matter, and about "millionth parts," that are to be raised up; but after all, it will be none the less, nor will it be more, for all these speculations. The highest point in the scale of certainty

that we can reach is that of *perhaps*. We say nothing against the theories of learned men. We respect them. It may be as they assert, and it may not. This much we may do: we may lie down as the good Bishop of London did, leaving for his epitaph the words, "I shall rise again."

That there will be a change, unlike any we have ever experienced before, is evident; that to the believer it will be a blessed change, is also evident. There is to be a reversion, as we have said; "power" will take the place of "weakness," "glory" of "dishonor," and spiritual will supplant the natural. Hence we often hear of Christians departing from this life in "sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection."

The nature of it they are not to know until they enter upon it; the peculiarity of any state cannot be appreciated until it becomes a present reality to the spirit, appealing to its consciousness and experience.

The Sadducees sought to know the nature of this change when they went to Christ with what they idly deemed perplexing questions concerning it. All their conceptions of Messiah's kingdom, and all their ideas of futurity, were modified by their carnal notions. If the body were to be raised, then, they thought, all the carnal relations would also be restored; that if successive claims were acknowledged in this life, who would give the priority to these in another? If seven different times the woman had wedded, and as many times she had seen the relation dissolved by death, "in the resurrection," say they, "whose wife will she be of the seven?" Said the Saviour, "Do ye not err yourselves, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God? For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels which are in heaven."

Is not this enough of its nature? Can we not be content with this knowledge, with these anticipations, until we come to the "general assembly," and are fully initiated into the "secret things"?

The lucid morning of Christ's resurrection has insured a glorious morning to all believers, before which all darkness and gloom shall flee away. A day of unclouded brightness shall follow, and they shall bask in the sunshine of eternal love forever, for upon this day the sun shall never set. It will never merge into twilight, nor twilight into night; and the saints shall continually exult in the power of an endless but active life. The power, beauty, and glory of the resurrection body may be considered in a future chapter; we therefore defer the consideration of this for the present.

We may not fully know here of the elements and properties of that body, or understand perfectly the full significance of rising again; but we may, and should, take God's assured word, that whatever he provides for his faithful ones in the future will be for their highest conceivable happiness, though the matter and the manner be such as have not "entered into the heart of man."

We may, and should, yield ourselves to the guidance of heavenly wisdom, following where it leads, and then our path may be like that of the just "which shineth more and more unto the perfect day;" we may reach heights from which we may discover glorious views; we may see sights never beheld while upon a lower plane.

Christ hath risen and ascended; he stands on high; and the higher we rise, the nearer we are to him. Thither our hopes and aspirations tend, and there our hopes and affections should centre. He who is "the resurrection and the life," is all and in all to the penitent soul. Multitudes of all people and kindred, all nations and tongues, have gone downward to the grave, and upward to the skies, singing triumphantly as they went, because of the richness of that glory that attends the renewal and revival of the best and holiest in God's creation. The Christian may exult in the prospect of a nobler, purer life for all that is good and saintly. O, blessed morning of resurrection, that shall arise upon a perfect, a sinless world.

Surely it might be said of these things, after all attempts to fathom the ocean of blessedness that lies but just before, it is "above all knowledge," it "passeth understanding."

"Ye faithful souls, who Jesus know,
If risen indeed with him ye are,
Superior to the joys below,
His resurrection's power declare.

"Your real life, with Christ concealed,
Deep in the Father's bosom lies,
And glorious, as your Head revealed,
Ye soon shall meet him in the skies."

And what this may be we give in the beautiful words of Chrysostom:—

"If a man has a statue decayed by rust and age, and mutilated in many of its parts, he breaks it up and casts it into a furnace, and, after the melting, he receives it again in more beautiful form. As thus the dissolving in the furnace was not a destruction, but a renewing of the statue, so the death of our bodies is not a destruction, but a renovation. When, therefore, you see as in a furnace, your flesh flowing away to corruption, dwell not on that sight, but wait for the recasting. And advance in your thoughts to a still higher point—for the statuary casting into the furnace a brazen image, only makes a brazen one again. God does not thus; but, casting in a mortal body, formed of clay, he returns you an immortal statue of gold."

There is a richness in all God's works, as will be clearly manifest "in that day" when he makes up his "jewels;" then will appear models of beauty, before which the proudest monuments of human art will grow dim and seem worthless. The gems which he has polished will sparkle in his coronet with a brilliancy transcending all earthly brightness, and all things will shine with his own imparted lustre.

"Sun of the resurrection! which shall burst
In vivid splendor on the grave's long night,
Hopes of thy coming, by devotion nursed,
Fill the lorn heart with unalloyed delight;
'Tis thy young twilight, with mysterious gleam,
That dawns so freshly on life's fevered dream!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

The Soul of infinite Moment. — Votaries of Science. — Dying Thief. — Moses and Elias on the Mount. — Premonitions of Conscience. — Joys of Believers. — Early Church History. — Opinion of primitive Fathers. — Hades. — Pneumatology of Paul. — Views of Whately.

“None should think that souls are immediately judged after death; for they are all detained in one common custody, till the time shall come when the greatest Judge shall examine their respective merits.” — *Lactantius*.

“One moment — and we breathe within the *Evermore*.” — *Anon.*

WHEN thoroughly convinced of immortality, how earnestly does the spirit of man cry out, “Show me my home as it yet may be!” How it lingers around the threshold of the unrevealed, eager to catch the faintest indications of the *may be*, if nothing more certain is offered! And surely there is nothing of greater interest — nothing that more deeply concerns it. There is nothing in all creation of so much moment to us as our immortal souls. God’s works, as displayed in creation, are indeed very beautiful and very wonderful; but ever, as we are engaged in the admiring contemplation of these, we hear a voice within us, saying, These things shall pass away, and I shall live to see them. I shall survive “the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds;” therefore bestow thy care and thy devotion upon me, for as far as the spiritual exceeds the natural, so far do I transcend in beauty and excellence all that thine eyes behold in the material universe. We ourselves pay this involuntary tribute to the immortal principle within us. We cannot be so engrossed in externals as to hush

these inner tones, as to drown the solemn voice that bids us take heed for the future. The would-be exclusive devotees of science, art, and nature have often been interrupted in their pursuits by significant questions concerning the *end*. They have been startled by the idea of realities besides those they were endeavoring to establish; they have found them appealing to their inner souls with the resistless power of living truth. "What shall be the end thereof?" was a question propounded to one, the energies of whose being were given to the consideration of the present, and to the accumulation of what it offers. "I shall have the satisfaction of enjoying the reward of my labors," said he, "in ease and luxurious quiet." "And what shall succeed that?" was asked. Silence ensued for a time; but the reluctant confession was wrung out at last, "As it seems the lot of all to die, I suppose I must share in the general mortality." "And what then?" was again urged; but the proud man was dumb. Christians know that death will come, and put an end to their connection with all material things; and while engaged in the use and enjoyment of the temporal, as God designed they should be, they yet have an eye constantly upon the spiritual, and only value the former as it subserves the interests of the latter. Natural science has a peculiar charm for them, for in it they are ever discovering new traces of the divine wisdom and goodness, and they feel that they are commencing a study which they are to resume in eternity at infinitely greater advantage; but when they come with the query, Shall we resume our studies the moment after death? then must they expect silence, for all things are dumb on this point, or at least give no positive assurance.

Nature opens delightful fields of thought to every one; but there is this difference between the sanctified and unsanctified pupil: the one does all things and seeks all things with reference to the end; the other keeps that end out of sight as much as possible, thus defeating the object of the great Teacher. All things are not revealed to the faithful students; but they

are to be, and it does not particularly concern them at what precise moment the revelation shall take place. The redeemed soul will be studying into the principles of the divine economy while the cycles of eternity roll round, and there will be no point in its remotest history when there will not be limitless subjects for its contemplation ; but the entire character of those subjects, and the manner of their presentation, may not be fully known to us now, nor is it necessary that they should be.

We may prepare for admission into some institution of learning, and imagine the system by which it is governed, what we may hope for from its peculiar administration, and what our conduct will be, with such influences bearing upon it ; but we can never know the effect of the whole combination until we are brought into its direct sphere, and find the various elements incorporated in our own experience. So we may conjecture with regard to the future ; but we may never perfectly know until the veil is removed, and we behold with spirit eyes the peculiarity of our destiny ; until we actually become pupils of that great and divine institution — *the school of the world to come*.

With our inquiring minds, our fertile powers of imagination, there is a strong inclination of our being to penetrate into the unknown.

There is a sense in which we may and should seek to know the unknown ; but we should tread cautiously on hallowed ground — that portion which the Lord has purposely kept for himself.

God's Word nowhere expressly asserts what is the state of the soul during the interval that passes between the first arrival in the spirit world and the final resurrection. What that state is which immediately succeeds the dissolution of the body, we cannot tell. We are conscious that, after all attempts to settle this question, we must leave it where we found it. Yet when we hear Christ saying to the penitent thief upon the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," we cannot for-

bear the conclusion that "the welcome is sounded in another world ere the farewell is hushed in this." It comes to us as an indication that the departed spirit finds itself at once with the Lord, in the exercise of its powers — loving and praising. When the prayer came from the lips of the dying thief, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," the answer conveyed, not the assurance of a far-off remembrance; not the promise that in the day of final resurrection he would awake him from his long sleep, and bring him, with others, to his right hand, though this might have been the rejoicing sound of infinite mercy to the repentant one; but it said, in no doubtful terms, "To-day" thou shalt realize even more than thou hast asked.

Was this an exceptional case? Was the "thief" — whose repentance in the hour of death secured for him everlasting life — was he to enter upon the immediate enjoyment of his Lord, while thousands of believing, faithful ones, whose lives have been consecrated to the divine service, are condemned to lie in the shades of unconsciousness for ages? Yet there are those who affirm that this is the state of all the dead until the judgment.

What mean the dying glimpses of believers — those earnest that betoken a speedy realization, if these things be so? We have reason to believe that Christ is never nearer his people than in the hour of death; and we would fain believe that what he then shows them is no delusion. Whence those rapturous views of Jesus, of angels and departed friends, that come as so many blessed comforters to make the last journey pleasant? They are often spoken of by the dying as foretastes of heavenly bliss — as a prelude to the more perfect joy that seems but just before them. The martyr Stephen, in his last moments, saw "the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." He recognized his Redeemer, and sought mercy for his murderers; and was this a momentary recognition, that was to be followed by ages of forgetfulness?

Some affirm that the spirit remains unconscious until the resurrection, and that then, awaking out of sleep, the transition will seem but momentary; that the intervening time is not as lost links in the chain of being, but that the connection is perfect between the last moment of consciousness on earth and that renewed at the final day. At the first glance of such an opinion, the question comes unbidden, "Why this waste of ages, when the mighty throng might be continually chanting praises to the Eternal; when the redeemed host might be flying on seraph wings to fulfil the high behests of their heavenly King? They say that this earth is to be purified, to be fitted up for the abode of the ransomed ones, and that when this is done, they will arise from the place where they repose, and in a triumphal procession enter and take possession of their new home — coming "with songs and everlasting joy," since the "days of their mourning are ended;" and none can dispute their title to the new-found mansions, reared by the divine Builder of heaven and earth. We raise no question here upon the plausibility of this supposition; but is not "the Lord's throne prepared in the heavens," and are not angels round about that throne, and is there not something said of others who cast their crowns there, singing, "Blessing and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever"?

How many we have seen depart this life with the confident expectation that when they closed their eyes upon transitory things, they should open them upon the undimmed brightness of the celestial state. Have all these been united in a mistake? Have not they been taught of God, and is he not faithful and true in his teaching, raising no hopes but those he will satisfy, kindling no expectations merely for the purpose of disappointment? Why these longings which Christians so often express to be with Christ, if they are to have no intelligent apprehension or enjoyment of him, until all that are on earth, and all that are yet to be, have finished their work, and can come together around the judgment throne?

Paul desired that he might be released, because he would be with Christ. By the eye of faith he discovered a crown in waiting for him, and it seems he thought not of the lapse of ages before he should receive it, but rather that he should soon pass into the joy of his Lord — that when Death should lead him away from the scenes of time, he would be greeted by the sight of another and peaceful abode, where trouble and sorrow are known no more; and where he could render purer service and holier homage than ever below. Were Moses and Elias summoned from their long sleep to appear on the Mount of Transfiguration, and when they retired from it, was it to return to a repose that was to remain unbroken until the day of final consummation? We cannot tell with absolute certainty; but there is a strong probability that it was not so.

In speaking of the intermediate state, however, we confine ourselves mainly to the views and opinions of those who have written on the subject; and those who feel interested in the consideration of the matter can take the evidence as it stands, and decide according to their own convictions of truth. It is an idea associated rather with the church than with the Scriptures. Revelation has left it undecided, and for the wisest of reasons. It tells us that "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord;" and since that blessedness is attainable, may be held in everlasting possession, why should any vex themselves with the question whether there be any intermediate state or not? The soul once intrusted to the Great Shepherd, he will lead and guide safely through whatever it has to pass before it reaches the green pastures and perennial streams of the "better land."

The question of consciousness or unconsciousness, however, must be a matter of the most profound interest to every rational being. When this is presented, it cannot fail to challenge investigation, for the idea of remaining in silence and darkness for an indefinite period of time, incapable of the exercise of

any faculty, is, especially to one breathing after God and holiness, after perfection of being and worship, a most unwelcome thought. But all our speculations upon the subject, from any point of view, are of no practical necessity. "As the tree falls, so it lies." As death finds us, so will the judgment. It is perfectly clear that the present life is the only place to work out our salvation; it is the only season of trial, of discipline, and preparation for a happy and blessed immortality. Beyond the grave there is no change of condition. Whatever the intermediate place may be, if there be any at all, it is evident it affords no ground of hope to those who reject the offers of life here. "There are no acts of pardon passed" there.

As Christians have departed this mortal life in holy exultation and triumph, so shrinking, unforgiven souls have passed away with the equally terrible conviction that their approaching fearful doom was one of awful certainty. Could they see the least gleam of hope, that after ages of suffering their sins would be expiated, and in some measure their sentence lightened, then the crushing load upon their spirits might be lifted, to relieve them from the overwhelming pressure.

Such has been the confession of many a man whose life had been a continued scene of daring impiety. They have experienced a fearful meaning in the truth that "coming events cast their shadows before;" for all the fearfulness of swift retribution has settled down upon their last hours.

In ages of darkness and superstition, such as the world has seen, the doctrine of an intermediate state was a different thing. Then everything degenerated into forms to meet the natural bias of depraved hearts. Life might be filled up with iniquity and self-indulgence, but a sufficient modicum of current coin was considered an ample inducement for a given number of prayers, and these prayers were to release their imprisoned souls, and give them entrance into a larger and more desirable place. Convents were founded for this very purpose—for the sole intent of helping on the dead; and petitions to this end were

constantly on hand, provided the moneyed perquisite was advanced to produce the needed inspiration. In close conjunction with prayers *for* the dead was praying *to* the dead. Believing that they were detained in a mediate state for the purification of their souls by suffering, from which they might be delivered by the prayers of surviving friends, there was also conceived the idea of reciprocal interest, by which the living were induced to solicit the departed to intercede with God for those on earth. Millions flowed into the coffers of the church for these intercessory offices; the key of the shaded realm was given into the hands of a selfish, designing priesthood, and the whole matter of salvation became a matter of sordid and debasing avarice. The whole doctrine of purgatory, it has been said, was shaped from the doctrine of a mediate place, as held by the primitive church, "a gathering place for souls," previous and preparatory to some other change which awaited them, and that the Greek and Romish church received these traditions, upon which they built up a system to suit their own ideas of prominence and power.

Whether this was the origin of their unhallowed system, or not, we cannot say, but it is evident the attention of the church at a very early period was directed to this subject; and since light in the beginning of centuries was not so transparently clear as now, it would not be strange if some of their notions appear dim and confused to us, or that they really were so. The unanimous sentiment among the early Christians seems to have been, that the soul was detained somewhere, for a time, between death and the final resurrection. According to history, though controversies were waged upon almost every other subject, upon this they were all united. Nobody called it in question. "Into a mediate place all men passed alike at death, and there awaited the issues of the final judgment. There all the patriarchs and prophets were. Thither all the nations, Jewish and heathen, had alike gone. They were not all in the same condition in respect to happiness or suffering, but they awaited there the ultimate bliss or the ultimate woe."

"All the generations from Adam to this day," says Clement, "are past and gone; but they that have finished their course in Christ possess the region of the godly, who shall be manifested in the visitation of the kingdom of Christ." Justin Martyr considers the idea as savoring of Gnosticism; that the spirit is received immediately after death into the heavenly kingdom, without any detention in a preliminary state. Irenæus observes that our Saviour himself was mindful of this law, by staying three days in the place of the dead. "Whereas, then, our Lord went," he says, "into the midst of the shadow of death, where the souls of deceased persons abode, and then afterward rose again in the body, and was, after his resurrection, taken up into heaven, it is plain that the souls of his disciples, for whose sake the Lord did these things, shall go likewise to that invisible place appointed to them by God, and there abide till the resurrection, waiting for the time thereof; and afterward receiving their bodies, and rising again perfectly, — that is, in their bodies, — as our Lord did, shall so come to the sight of God."

Tertullian, Novatian, and Jerome advance similar sentiments, and Augustin declares that "the time which is interposed between a man's death and the last resurrection containeth souls in hidden receptacles, according as every one is worthy of rest or labor."

The liturgies of the primitive church, however, are considered as more plainly indicative of the prevalent opinion than simple individual expression; and we transcribe the form of one or two from the collection of Dr. Brett, an able and learned writer, who has been interested to trace these things back to the days of the primitive fathers and the early church.

St. Basil's Liturgy, as it is called, used in the Constantinopolitan and also the Alexandrian church, is upon this wise: "Remember all who are before gone to sleep, in hope of the resurrection to eternal life, and give them rest, O Lord, where the light of thy countenance shines upon them."

"Vouchsafe to remember, O Lord, those who have pleased thee from the beginning of the world, the holy fathers, patriarchs, apostles, prophets, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, and every just spirit departed in the faith of Christ. Give rest to all their souls, on the bosoms of our holy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Lead them, and put them into a green place upon the waters of rest, in the paradise of pleasure, where there is no grief, or sadness, or groaning in the light of thy holy saints. Give rest, O Lord, in that place, to the souls of them whom thou hast taken to thyself, and vouchsafe to translate them to thy heavenly kingdom."

That of Chrysostom and others recognizes the unconscious state as succeeding death; but to go farther back still, to the early history of the Hebrews, we find the same indefinite ideas of death and what follows. "They believed in human immortality, and that Hades was the common receptacle of all departed souls. But of man's condition in Hades they conceived nothing more than that it was one of comparative weakness and shadowy repose. It was the region of the phantom nations, into which all passed alike at death. Kings reigned there, but on unsubstantial thrones;" and all was doubtful and confused. God and his angels they placed in some imaginary abode above the sky; and there these high intelligences were to remain, above and beyond the shadowy realm which contained all spirits which had left the sphere of mortal life.

In process of time, however, under the partial enlightenment which came from the teachings of the Rabbins, something more tangible began to be associated with the spirit-abode of man. Instead of assigning all promiscuously to Hades, they divided the same into compartments, that thereby a line might be drawn between the good and the evil, or the righteous and the wicked; thus furnishing to those who appreciated goodness the opportunity of having exclusively congenial society in their exile from the goodly land, which had been typified in the richly-laden country of Canaan. The division

consisted of three apartments, the upper one a place of comparative rest and happiness, consecrated to the good, and open for the reception of such in all ages. Thither the patriarchs and prophets had gone; and there kindred spirits in all ages, down to the end of time, were to gather, forming one vast assembly, — forever filling the mighty space, and yet never full. This was called the Lower Paradise, and was to maintain its peculiarity of condition and law, until from the regions above should go forth a voice, echoing through all the apartments, saying, "Come to judgment." Below this was another place — the abode of the wicked — one of comparative darkness and gloom, to which were consigned all heathen and rebellious nations, and all such as had no sympathy with the virtuous ranks above them. Though wanting in pleasantness and comfort, and the delightful features of the holier state, it yet was not the culmination of suffering or punishment. This was reserved for the *final day* — a day of retribution for all — the evil and the good. Still lower, down, *down*, was the terrible Gehenna, with its fearful flames and scathing woe; but the power of both was to be forever unknown until the last sentence of the last day should be pronounced upon the incorrigible children of men, who had resisted all appeals to goodness in the land of the living.

Josephus supposes this opinion to have passed from the Hebrews to other people, where it became so much disfigured by various fictions and inventions as to present quite a different phase in their history. "The notion," he says, "was variously embellished by the Greek poets; and afterward, being stripped by Plato of much of its poetic ornament, was embodied in his philosophical system. Hence, again, the Latins, and nations at large, derived their phraseology in speaking of the state of the dead."

The entire region assigned to the spirits of the departed was called by the Jews *Sheol*, by the Latins *Inferi*, and by the Greeks *Hades*. For a more particular description of this

latter, and perhaps most popular idea of the ancients, we transcribe from this same historian. Some had given it a position under the world, not knowing where to locate so doubtful a thing; but when Josephus comes to its consideration, he says Hades is a place in the world not regularly finished — a subterranean region, it may be, where the sunlight never enters. "This region is allotted as a place for soul-custody, in which angels are appointed as guardians, to distribute temporary punishment, according to the behavior and manner of each. In this region there is a certain place set apart, as a lake of unquenchable fire, whereinto, we suppose, no one hath hitherto been cast; but it is prepared for a day afore-determined by God, in which the righteous sentence shall deservedly be passed upon all men; when the unjust, and disobedient to God, shall be adjudged to this everlasting punishment, while the just shall obtain an incorruptible and never-failing kingdom. These are now, indeed, confined in Hades, but not in the same place wherein the unjust are confined; for there is one descent into this region, at whose gate we believe there stands an archangel with a host; which gate, when those pass through that are conducted down by the angels appointed over souls, they do not enter the same way, but the just are guided to the right hand, and are led, with hymns sung by the angels appointed over that place, into a region of light, in which angels have dwelt from the beginning of the world. This place we call the bosom of Abraham.

"But as to the unjust, they are dragged by force to the left hand by the angels allotted for punishment; no longer going with a good will, but as prisoners driven by violence. Between them is fixed a chaos deep and large, insomuch that a just man, that hath compassion upon them, cannot be admitted, nor can one that is unjust, if he were bold enough to attempt it, pass over it. In this Hades the souls of all men are confined until a proper season, which God hath determined, when he will make a resurrection of all men from the dead; not procuring

a transmigration of souls from one body to another, but raising again those very bodies, which you Greeks, seeing to be dissolved, do not believe." "But learn not to disbelieve it," continues he, "for while you believe that the soul is created, and yet is made immortal by God, according to the doctrine of Plato, and this in time, be not incredulous, but believe that God is able, when he hath raised to life that body which was made as a compound of the same element, to make it immortal; for it must never be said of God that he is able to do some things, and unable to do others."

Thus it appears that the most learned of the ancient historians, though firmly anchored on God's power, were nevertheless floating on some loose planks; and those to whom the pages of revelation have been opened have no particular guiding star, whose unerring light shall point to the certain harbor into which the departed enter.

The Pharisees in the days of Christ believed in the re-incarnation, the entering into the same bodies which had been vacated at dissolution, which were eventually to become immortal, not yet comprehending the spiritual and glorified body which Christ by his incarnation and death was to secure, — not yet understanding the "new and living way," by which admittance to the heavenly kingdom was to be gained.

As Paul's spirit hovered between the two worlds, he conceived that to be "absent from the body" was to be "present with the Lord." As his probation was about to close, his eye of faith penetrated the *unseen*, and beheld the pure and spiritual joys of the church triumphant; and his soul hastened to join the "innumerable company" that was so divinely employed. He had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and instructed in the history, literature, and philosophy of his times; he had imbibed the spirit of his age, and become thoroughly indoctrinated in all matters of Jewish theology — in the resurrection and what should follow. When he came to be a disciple of a better religion, he found it inculcated a new spirit, and brought

new ideas ; and firmly convinced of the superiority of the one over the other, the one he abrogated, and the other retained and cherished ; so that Paul the Jew and Paul the Christian are different authorities. From him, in the latter character, there is no appeal. He is inspired to declare the counsel of God, and whatever he asserts of life or death, of present or future, we may receive as unquestionably true.

A certain writer, in speaking of the "pneumatology of Paul," declares that, "in the fervency of his faith, the apostle evidently expected that the time would come, and was even close at hand, when Christian believers, while yet in the flesh, would become so completely regenerated, redeemed, and glorified, as to render no longer necessary any descent into a mediate world. Their change, while yet on earth, would be so complete, that their translation to heaven would be immediate and instantaneous, when they were done with time."

But why the necessity for a "mediate state"? There is no repentance there, no change, no possibility of commencing a new life, and preparing for the better condition of the blest. If so, the most wicked and abandoned might have hope in death ; might have something to soothe those wretched fears, which always haunt them when they see the present losing itself in the future. If souls are not regenerated here, where is the slightest evidence that they will ever be? Intelligent readers of the Bible find nothing there to convince them that they will ever, that they can ever, have any part in the song of redemption in a future world, unless they have had their hearts and voices tuned in this ; unless they have learned the notes, and know somewhat of the nature of the heavenly anthem.

There is such a thing now with believers as "fervency of faith ;" such as wafts the melodies of the celestial sphere to their inmost souls, making them almost impatient to join the holy choir, that forever they may be within the sound of such enrapturing music. These are kindred spirits with Paul, and it is evidently the common belief of all such, that, "when done

with time," they shall find immediate entrance into heaven; that, when they close their eyes upon the fading and transitory, they shall open them upon the unfading and eternal.

There are those, however, who entertain opposite views, as we have seen. Whately thinks a change to take place between death and the resurrection, since we see the mouldering body become resolved into its original dust, and at the final day we shall again have bodies. He also plainly declares that we cannot comprehend the state, since the Scriptures have not revealed it; but that there are arguments which may be adduced in support of its being a state of enjoyment and suffering, according to character, and of its being one of perfect insensibility and unconsciousness, either of which opinion may be safely entertained without failing in any part of faith which it is essential for a Christian to hold.

The rich man and Lazarus, Moses and Elias on the mount, the thief upon the cross, whom the advocates of the former opinion have been wont to consider as furnishing strong intimations in favor of their position, he groups together under a merely *figurative* cloak. In sustaining the last idea — that of unconsciousness — he lays peculiar stress upon the manner in which the sacred writers speak of the dead as being "asleep." But is there nothing figurative in this? "Balmy sleep" is associated with rest in this mortal life, and it is with some such feelings that we see Christians retire to their last, long rest in the grave, and sing over them —

"Asleep in Jesus — blessed sleep,
From which none ever wake to weep."

To reconcile the anticipations of believers with the dreary prospect of unconsciousness during the long interval prior to the resurrection, he affirms that a long and a short space of time are the same to one who is insensible; that, to all practical purposes, it is the same whether he is conscious at once, or for a long period to come. "To the party concerned," he says, "there is no interval whatever; but to each person,

according to this supposition, the moment of his closing his eyes in death will be instantly succeeded by the sound of the last trumpet, which shall summon the dead, even though ages shall have intervened. And in this sense the faithful Christian may be practically in Paradise the day he dies. The promise made to the penitent thief, and the apostle's wish 'to depart, and to be with Christ,' which, he said, was 'far better' than to remain any longer in this troublesome world, would each be fulfilled to all practical purposes, provided each shall have found himself in a state of happiness in the presence of his Lord, the very instant (according to his own perception) after having breathed his last in this world."

There is yet another thing advanced by some who argue to this same end, — that the soul can never exist separately from the body, and be active, since the latter is a necessary vehicle — that on which it depends for the exercise of its powers. The mind receives its impressions through the organs of sense, which are parts of the body; "and if, as seems highly probable, the brain is the organ of thought, it follows that the soul, so far from acting with more freedom and energy when parted from the body, will not be able to act at all, but will remain, if it continues to exist, in a state of utter insensibility, just as a man is in a state of insensibility to objects of sight while his eyes are closed, though his spiritual part is not at all impaired." Do such fully apprehend the spiritual? Who with the natural understanding can look into all the possibilities of futurity in respect to this or any other question? Can any "by searching find out God, — find out the Almighty unto perfection"? If so, they may tell us what shall happen unto the spirit when the Lord leadeth it out unto himself, — tell the "Lord's secrets;" but till then care should be exercised lest the attempt be made to tell

"more than He has taught,
Tell more than he revealed;
Preach tidings which he never brought,
And read what he left sealed."

Conjectures, indeed, may not be disallowed, if *arsued* humbly and reverentially; but where the Scriptures are silent, we can say nothing positively. All that is necessary for us to know certainly we do know. We know that we must die; we know that after death is the judgment, that from the trial and the sentence there is no escape, and that from the character of it we shall know our endless doom. We know that we may avert a miserable destiny by a cordial reception of Christ — by a practical and grateful recognition of the infinite sacrifice; we know that heaven is open “to him that overcometh;” and we know how we may overcome, — so that it becometh us to act according to the knowledge we possess, and thereby be fitted for an eternally happy state, commence when it may. Trusting in Jesus, we cannot be unhappy; yielding our spirits to his care, we need not be troubled by fears that he will leave them unheeded and alone in any part of their history. The divine care and love are constant; and because we, in our short-sightedness, with our limited capacity, cannot comprehend how the soul can exist without the body, or precisely how it will fare, shall we pronounce our own decisions, and by so doing limit the Infinite? We never shall know fully of these things until we have an experimental acquaintance with the laws which govern the spirit-realm.

God is a living, active, all-pervading spirit; and is he not able to create a sphere for the activity of all those who lay aside their bodies and go out of sight?

Does he not tell us of “ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation”? thus reminding us that somewhere holy beings reside who are swift on errands of love, whose sympathies are in fullest exercise, and whose activity is constant and untiring, far surpassing anything conceived in mortal regions among those “clothed upon,” even among the holiest and best. We have known holy men and women, whose love, sympathy, and benevolence were after a divine pattern; but these always regarded their bodies as a

fettering thing, and each looked forward with delight to the time when the soul should receive its blessed emancipation, and fly to its congenial work in a purer sphere. Said a Christian mother to her weeping children, "I am almost home. Tomorrow you will be sorrowing, but I shall be happy — rejoicing in heaven. Think of me there, and let it dry your tears and soothe your grief." Multitudes, with the same consolation, have left the loved and mourning circle on earth, expecting the speedy realization of their hopes. Who taught them this? We say neither one thing nor the other. We *cannot*.

God doeth all things well. He has a right to do as it pleaseth him. "His ways are not as our ways," but they are infinitely better. If he see fit to take the soul to himself immediately after death, it is well: if he choose some other way, it is also well. It is true it is more grateful to our feelings to think of entering at once into the joy of the Lord, and to us the evidence may be sufficient to warrant the certainty of expectation; but in this let all be united "to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and the assurance is ready that all good things will be added, not only in this life, but in that which is to come.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FUTURE THE SOUL'S ETERNAL HOME.

Universality of Home Influence. — Providential Designs. — The eternal Home. — Views of Reason and Imagination. — Character given to a future Home by these. — The only true Picture found in the Gospel. — A little While and the Christian will reach the blessed Mansions.

“If there be ever a charm, a joy, without satiety or alloy;
 If there be a hope that lives, on the pure happiness it gives;
 If there be a refuge fair, a safe retreat from toil and care,
 Where the heart may a dwelling find, with many joys combined,
 Where every feeling, every tone, best harmonizes with its own,
 Whence its vain wishes ne’er can rove, —
 O, it is home! — a home of love!” — *Anon.*

AMONG the sweet sounds that vibrate through the earth, none is sweeter than *home*; none hath greater power to stir the fount of feeling and awake pure and holy thought, true and worthy affections, which are as angel-guides to the naturally wayward, straying heart. All the choicest blessings of life cluster here, and there are none so hardened or perverse as not to have a chord somewhere which can be touched by the tender remembrances of home. It may be deeply imbedded in a rough nature — well nigh destroyed by crime; but traces of it remain longer than anything else; and the heart of the culprit melts, the tears of the prisoner flow, as a loving hand applies the pressure. The proud and the guilty may be dead to almost every consideration rather than to the associations of the sacred spot where they were shaded and shielded in their earliest and happiest days. They may wander abroad, forsake the temples of God and the altars of religion; but the

smoke of that incense which went up from the fireside altar around which they were wont to gather is never out of mind. The sanctuary of home will always be sacred ; so that, in thinking of this, the involuntary language of the wanderer will be, —

“ My heart untravelled fondly turns to thee.”

Wherever he may roam, and whatever he may be, or under whatever circumstances, and with whatever prospects, his heart and his home are synonymous things ; where one is the other will be. There are few indeed who have not some cherished spot around which fond memories linger — a spot loved above all others, the love of which may be pressed to the heart as a talisman for safety in a path thickly set with evil.

‘ The mountain heights are dear to some,
To some the valley’s deep recess ;
To some the desert is a home,
With thoughts to cheer and thoughts to bless.

“ To some the tempest-troubled sea
Is music ; while the snows and ice
That gird earth’s arctic scenery
To some bring dreams of Paradise.

“ The fervor of the tropic beams,
The darkness of deep woods, the fall
Of dangerous, cataract-shaken streams,
All scatter joys around them — all.”

And why ? Because of the blessed associations connected with them ; because in each there are heart resting-places — arbors where living tendrils creep and twine, forming unions and alliances of most beautiful growth, so that to assail them is to touch life in its tenderest and most sacred form.

It makes no difference whether it be in a burning or a frigid zone : if loving hearts intertwine, there is a spot where sweetness and fertility shed their grateful influences to cheer human souls. It cannot be otherwise, for the home is a God-ordained institution. He has made it the deepest and most central want

of the soul, so far as earth and time are concerned. There are loves, affections, hopes, and desires in every nature, that can be fully met and expanded only by the quiet, subduing, elevating influences of home. It is a safeguard, a blessing in every conceivable point of view, and speaks loudly in praise of that benevolence which had such particular and tender regard for the welfare and happiness of mankind, especially since these same human beings have manifested from the first a disregard of claims existing between themselves and the all-benevolent One. Whatever we may say or think of God's plans in reference to other things, in this we all agree—that in the peculiar fitness of the home for the heart, the arrangements of Providence are admirable. These "special points and centres" for the attraction of human love and sympathy, these relations and affinities that give us so much of pure, unmixed delight, are among the best gifts of Heaven to mortal men. The ties which bind the family circle together are stronger and purer than all others. In its disinterestedness, its unselfishness, there is "less of earth and more of heaven" than in anything else on earth. Language fails to limit the influence of a truly happy home—happy in the true and highest sense, which means simply that it be a Christian home.

In sickness and sorrow, in any and all circumstances, we turn to home, as the realization of every hope, with the expectation of finding ourselves soothed in every particular. No time of life is more trying in all the world than that which calls us away from the long-sheltering roof, beneath which has been garnered a priceless store of pleasures, unknown and unnamed save in the home circle that eagerly shared them. *No* time, did we say? We must not forget the sorrowful era that transfers the home centre to the other side of the "dark river;" but our present theme calls us to the contemplation of earthly joys, while unbroken, particularly.

The conviction always grows upon the mind of the ambitious,

wandering youth, who has been lured away by the influence of promising schemes, that

"There is a spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest,"

where cheerful hearts, like the kaleidoscope, make varied and beautiful forms of the most discordant materials. Hence the traveller in foreign lands has no fear like that of dying away from home and kindred, and the song of the wasting invalid is not unfrequently borne to us in the pathetic words, "Carry me home to die;" and coupled with this is the eager inquiry, "Are we almost there?" The spirit gathers strength amid home scenes. All thoughts, ideas, and associations of these things are pleasant, refreshing, and it is a place where all love to linger. Other things may lose their charm, but to life's latest day there is a magic spell around this. There is no grief like that which one feels if he be torn from them. There are no tears more bitter than those which the homeless shed. There is nothing that calls out quicker and livelier sympathies than to hear from quivering lips the story of *no home*. Its possession is the highest and best treasure with all, and to be deprived of it is the greatest earthly calamity that can be experienced.

"If I only had a home, as I once had," was the tearful expression of one who had known a sad reversion, "I should ask for nothing more;" and the same pitiful strain has come from many who have been led to feel that there is nothing so much to be desired on earth as a home. It is not so strange that *home* has been called the most expressive word in our language --- the sweetest in the whole vocabulary. It is to be doubted if another one can be found which stirs the fount of feeling so effectually as this --- which is so perfectly electrical in its influence. Even the ravings of dark delirium are often of "home, sweet home;" and no visions are so clear, powerful, and constant as those that come into the clouded mental chambers from this source. If, then, the idea of home be so much to us; if it be a necessity to have some place where to bestow our

affections which are undying in their nature, and if we adopt the conclusion, as we certainly must, that immortality is a divinely-conferred gift upon all men, — then it becomes a question infinitely more important than all others, Where is the home of my soul, and what may its character be?

If our earthly homes are so much to us, having power to control the whole character — subduing, reclaiming when nothing else can — challenging remembrance and love to the latest hours of life, what must be the future home, the eternal dwelling-place, of the soul? The modifying circumstances of time, in connection with home, are matters to us of the deepest interest, since our comfort is enhanced or impaired by them. We prepare for them, we dwell upon them, we anticipate or fear according to the prospect before us; but as far as eternity exceeds time, so far do the conditions of the future exceed the transitory arrangements of the present life. There are no provisions so important for us to make as those which relate to the welfare of the soul. There are no preparations that equal in solemn interest those demanded by the journey to the immortal land, for none ever return; all abide there forever; it is the home of those who "go hence." They go to a different clime, to be surrounded by new influences, associations, and companions; to engage in new scenes and employments, to be conversant with a new state of society altogether. So much, reason might assert, for if it settle down upon the strong probability of the endless life of the soul, it must also conclude something with reference to the manner of that life — how it shall be sustained, and what shall be characteristic of it. What, then, may we suppose man, guided simply by reason, would think of his future home? He cannot be wholly indifferent to it. If he thinks himself immortal, he will ruminate upon the probable consequences of immortality to him, and according to the strength and purity of his belief will be the measure of thought. Taking man as he is, with a given bias of mind and character, with his affections, loves, and hopes, we may suppose that in thinking of a future

home, he would naturally imagine it to be one which would involve the exercise of these. The present life must give the coloring to another. That which affords the highest enjoyment here is transferred, it may be in a perfected sense, to that which is to come. The social idea must be realized. In proportion as this part of the nature is developed, the mind would anticipate the same element in the coming and higher life. There man imagines a tone of society that will perfectly suit his ideas; he anticipates that there everything will accord with his tastes; that his companions will be congenial, and so his employments. In reality, ideas may be low and contracted, like those of the Indian, whose highest conceptions of a blissful life are spreading forests in which to roam, with a faithful dog, and plenty of game that may be easily taken; but there is no point, practically, beyond the highest, and if this be the loftiest view of which they are capable, and this their most refined imagination, then their future home must be to them a sphere wholly gauged by the present. Not that their ultimate destiny will really be under their control, but only that their earthly life determines their views and expectations of the future.

So, too, with all: that which constitutes the truest pleasure and yields the largest revenue of satisfaction would naturally be associated with the eternal home. Those who found peculiar gratification in the indulgence of the social instincts would think this the crowning glory of life under any conditions. Those to whom intellectual progress was an all-absorbing passion, who spent months and years in untiring devotion to science and art, would revel in the idea of an unimpeded pathway for their discoveries. And so, according to man's various predilections would be the variety of homes which imagination would build up for future residence.

There might be some general features in which all would agree. Let the opinions of all mankind upon this one subject be gathered together, and it will be found that the home of the soul has been regarded as an inviting place. Around that

would cluster all things that in any way tend to its comfort and well-being. So much of beauty and benevolent design is manifest in all that the eyes behold here, that culmination of beauty seems a natural conclusion of the human mind. The ideal is never fully realized below; therefore we discover a universal belief that it is to come.

Permanency would also be a characteristic ascribed by general consent. This forms the basis of all true happiness. The soul can never fully rest upon anything that is transient, as is seen in its constant restlessness in time; and therefore in all ideas of that to which it tends, there will ever be associated a joy which is changeless — a something so solid and substantial as to leave no room for fear lest the foundation be swept away. Oftentimes in this life, that which is loved the fondest and best is the soonest to be taken, and that on which we had most confidently relied is the first to fail us; so that we swing to and fro, feeling that nowhere have we a foundation upon which to rest our feet — that there is nothing abiding, nothing sure. The world is full of sighs; there are fountains of tears welling up from deep places, because of sad changes. Supports to which confiding natures cling with firmest tenacity are constantly falling, while but few know what has been crushed — what has been the extent of the ruin. "Sorrow's breezes" are continually bearing away some "heart-leaves," and through all the world dirges and requiems are mingled with new-born hopes and joyful anthems. There is no security against bankruptcy in these things. If to-day we are rich in our store of love and pleasure, to-morrow we may lose the whole, and feel, with anguish of heart, that there is nothing abiding here; and with so much of this experience it is natural to consider permanency an essential requisite of the home imagined to exist beyond this earth.

It would also be a home of peace and rest. The chafings and tossings of mortal life, its wars and commotions, are not welcome. Every individual stands on battle-ground — on the field of moral action, where opposing forces marshal them-

selves in fearful array. Instead of conquering, they are often conquered, until, weary and disheartened, they would lay their armor by, and find repose from the din and strife of clamorous hosts in some more favorable condition. It is true this warfare is never waged intelligently until we learn to apply the motives and inducements of the gospel; but with no prompter but conscience, we know there must be something of antagonism, since right and wrong both battle for indulgence. With this state of things, there is ample occasion to lead the soul to the appreciation of peace, and to desire in its profoundest depths a home of rest.

Its native desires tend to a home where all things shall be spread out on a larger and more perfect scale than can be found on earth. We observe the tendency among the unenlightened, the unchristianized nations of the world; but, after all, the home of the soul is never known, never fully understood, until it is disclosed by the messengers which God hath appointed for that purpose. All that we have mentioned, and even more, might be supposed concerning it; but it would be nothing but baseless and unsatisfactory conjecture, comparatively. God hath prepared a place for the soul — a home where it is to dwell through inconceivable ages; and how natural to suppose that man would desire the most perfect knowledge respecting it — that he would be eager for precise information of his eternal dwelling-place! It has been given. The nature, the characteristics, the employments of it are intimated, but no full and elaborate description is given. Some things are held in reserve by the Divine Proprietor, and enraptured guests are to find abundant blessing in the exercise of new and enlarged conceptions; but these things are to appear as we further unfold them in future chapters, guided by Scripture authority. There is a glorious home for the Christian. It is a happy, permanent, and peaceful home. Human conception has never reached the heights of felicity that tower so loftily here. All that can be imagined falls below the reality; "eye hath not seen, nor ear

heard" such sights and sounds as are to be seen and heard when the disembodied spirit shall find itself an inmate of its eternal home.

But is this home, this blessed home, for all spirits? We know the distinction which is made. We know that "nothing which is defiled" can enter in; that the impure cannot be classed with the pure, the unholy with the holy, for this would destroy the blessedness, the sacredness, of the heavenly abode.

The peaceful enclosure will never be invaded by hostile bands, and the happy family, with their celestial guards, will dwell in conscious security, while those who rejected the alluring title must know the strife and unrest of a far different home through all eternity. O, surely nothing can equal in importance the home of the soul. Nothing can excel in anticipative interest the idea of admission into the blessed mansions of eternal rest—the New Jerusalem. We turn to the contemplation of this—the purchased possession of the saints, the inheritance of believers, the world of light, and the Christian's home, with this reflection—that its real glory is yet unrevealed; that it is never to be fully comprehended until the gates unloose to let the travellers in, and the full splendor of the eternal throne bursts upon their wondering sight. Until then the Christian may labor, meanwhile singing, —

"Home, sweet, sweet home,
O Saviour, conduct me to heaven, my home."

The days of exile are fast passing away; the time of banishment is soon coming to an end; the period is hasting when Jesus will say to the faithful and obedient, —

"Well done! Sit down on my throne,
And dwell in my presence, forever at home"

A "dark river," "a narrow stream," spans the way between this home and that; yet but a little while and we shall all have crossed over; a little while, and we shall be inhabitants of another country; we shall be roaming on the banks of another shore; it may be "singing salvation forever and ever."

Whether it be so or not depends upon the preparation which is made in time. Those who wisely care for these things close their eyes upon this sublunary sphere, with the triumphant ejaculation, "I'm going home." The prospect lures them onward. They may have enjoyed much in their earthly homes, and grateful songs may have ascended often for so much of goodness; yet there is no home like the heavenly home, and they welcome death, which "divides this heavenly land from ours," with peculiar joy.

"Sweet glories rush upon the sight,
And charm the wondering eyes —
The regions of immortal light,
The beauties of the skies."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

Necessity of Heaven to Pagan Minds. — The various heavenly Creations. — The New Jerusalem of the Bible. — Heaven prefigured by Paradise and Canaan. — Locality of Heaven. — Opinions of various Writers. — Inspired Declarations. — Inconceivable Glories.

“There is a happy land, far, far away,
Where saints in glory stand, bright, bright as day.”

“Jerusalem, my glorious home,
Name ever dear to me.
Then shall my labors have an end!
When I thy joys shall see.”

FOR long ages, pilgrims in this unsatisfying land have been pressing eagerly forward, hoping for some shrine before which their spirits might bow, to realize the deep, unspoken longings of mysterious, restless natures. They have been anxious to know what they should see and experience when they should look upon the receding shores of time. Happiness is the universal consideration; therefore all have conceived the idea of a happy land, the location, the characteristics, of which have been varied according to the ignorance, or the cultivation and refinement, of the people who originated the several creations. There is hardly a Pagan mind, however isolated or conditioned, but that from some corner of its contracted self there comes welling up a desire for fairer hills and plains than it has yet seen. It is inherent in the human soul. Be it Christian or barbarian, there is yet a kindred passion for the better; and this, in its fulness, is buried from sight in the expected future. There they place it—the shrine is there. The difference is wide indeed. To the one it is the dignity and glory of the

New Jerusalem; to the other, the low delights of a sensual Paradise, the place of the gods, the abode of their deities. Indefiniteness characterizes all ideas in the childhood of nations, and thus we find this as we look far back into the past. While they discoursed of the departed as having gone to the gods, they scarcely paused to inquire, even of themselves, where the divinities dwelt. They were satisfied with the strange and the vague. The more of distortion and mystery, the more their emotions were mingled with awe and solemnity — if, indeed, so meaning a term may be applied to so meaningless a religion. At a later date, when a train of logical and philosophical influences began to work, a quickening impulse was given to mind, and it began to speculate upon the realm of the gods, and the final position held in reserve for the good. It must embrace definite forms. There must be definite seats and thrones for the gods, and a definite place for the soul's home; but according as men were earthly in their ideas this was surrounded with those things which constituted their highest ideal of benefit, and located in sympathy with their knowledge and desire. Their ambition was bounded by the terrestrial. Even their gods were imperfect and vengeful, and their heaven was overhung with the drapery of earth — yea, it was a part of earth itself, a favored portion, a fortunate isle, wrapped in sacred mystery indeed, but free from the incursions of hostile invaders, and happily exempt from anything to break the charm which reigned within and around it.

Hence the sacredness and beauty of the Elysian fields, with their mildness of sky, serenity of air, refreshing shades, and perpetual spring, comprising all of loveliness that human fancy could suggest. These were ever spread out to invite the hopes of the ancients — peaceful and blessed places of abode. All the fascinations of poetry and romance were lavished upon them to increase their beauty and lend attraction, so that even the word *Elysium* passed into the language as the synonyme for everything that is bright and lovely.

There were "vine-clad vales" and shaded bowers, where thick-clustering sweets were showered upon delicate senses; there they made

" Mossy grottos echo crystal floods
That murmur over sands of gold,"

and there "ambrosial trees" were to bear richest fruits, and flowers find full and fadeless perfection. Perennial sweetness and gentle, soul-quieting music were but an item in the varied prospect of their unearthly, and yet very earthly, abode. Somewhat like to this were the Hesperian Gardens, and Islands of the Blest, in calm and stormless seas, rising from out a misty realm, "beautiful for situation," and offering delightful recreation to tired mariners who had ended the voyage of life and found themselves upon the inviting shore. The breezes from off these peaceful isles were richly laden with delicious odors, intoxicating the spirit. These inviting bowers and smiling seas, however, it is thought, may be "easily traced back to the whispers of revelations in the cool of Eden, and in the tents of patriarchs, which promised to the good a land of peace and love beyond the stars, of which the earthly Paradise was but a shadowy type." This may be; but at this time it is evident that superstition had taken the place of revelation; that a sensuous religion had usurped the place of the quiet, permeating, far-reaching Christian faith, and people had degenerated into the natural, instead of rising into the spiritual. Their conceptions to purely Christian sense seem highly sensual and forbidding. Heaven was the product of a gross imagination, and all ideas of heavenly felicity were coined from a low human experience, and consequently were of a miserable type. The highest ideal of the future Elysium was a place that afforded opportunity for the utmost gratification of the passions, feelings, and desires, and for the indulgence of habit. The elevation and expansion of the soul by the influence of virtue and truth, constant and endless progression in holy character and experience, were no part of their anticipated destiny.

Permanency was not stamped either upon their religion or their heaven. The joys of the latter were but temporary, as the opinions of philosophers indicate. A thousand years might indeed offer their quota of enjoyment; but how even this period of time recedes into a mere point compared with the comprehensive or incomprehensible idea of a Bible eternity! Said one of the wisest of the ancients, "They who live holy and excellent lives, being freed from these earthly places as from prisons, ascend to a pure region above the earth, where they dwell; and those of them who are sufficiently purged by philosophy, live all their time without bodies, and ascend to still more beautiful habitations," to engage in "a series of joys and delights which cannot be described." He was in advance of the times in which he lived. His fellow-men had little sympathy with, or appreciation of, a standard that enjoined sanctity of life as a requisite for admission into the happy regions; yet it is interesting to notice how the earliest human experience betokens the desire and expectation — yea, the necessity — for a heaven.

Even the cheerless and repulsive philosophy of the Stoics is not without hopeful rays, that fall upon the stern nature with something of that influence which the warming sun of spring exerts upon the icy vales of winter. Zeno, the father and founder of this sect, taught his followers that the spirits of the good have an abode fitted expressly for them; that it is placed in subterranean regions, but, nevertheless, very fair and delightful. And yet this is wanting in the essential element of happiness — perpetuity. From this region of delight they are ultimately to go out, since a mighty conflagration will resolve all things, both matter and spirit, heaven and earth, into their original elements, and therefore in one common ruin. For a time there will be utter satisfaction, and then, utter annihilation, which, to a soul of infinite and ceaseless longings, is not at all adequate. However beautiful the heaven of the ancients, it is, nevertheless, wanting in the necessary elements,

—in all that constitutes true, heavenly bliss; and it must ever be thus with every abode which is not permanent. However garnished, and whatever its boasted character, it will always fall below the soul's level unless it be eternal. Those in modern times who have been unblest with gospel light have equally untrue notions of a heavenly state. Absurdities do not belong exclusively to the ancients, but, in a greater or less degree, to all people that know not the true God and Jesus Christ, who prepares mansions in a glorious world for the reception of his own, where he entertains them eternally. The carnal mind cannot appreciate spiritual things, and, if left to frame a heaven for itself, it will arrange a state of things more or less carnal as the scene of its future operations and enjoyment. The inhabitants of the Friendly Isles have a prevalent belief that the soul after death "is immediately conveyed, in a fast-sailing canoe, to a distant country, called *Doobludha*, resembling the Mahometan paradise; that those who are conveyed thither are no more subject to death, but feast on all the favorite productions of their native soil, with which this blissful abode is plentifully furnished."

The Japanese have a place of eternal pleasures they call the *Gokurakf*, where the souls of men receive their reward according to the merit of their past actions, forming degrees of happiness and pleasure; but the whole place is conceived to be so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of peace and love, "that each happy inhabitant thinks his portion the best, and, far from envying the happier state of others, wishes only forever to enjoy his own." The sovereign commander of these heavenly stations is *Amida*, the patron and protector of human souls, the God and Father of those who are so happy as to merit an introduction to the blessed place. This merit is based solely upon a virtuous life, and a regard to all things agreeable to their acknowledged head.

What a place is the Mahometan paradise! — voluptuous in

the extreme. "Their saints are represented as luxuriating amid beautiful gardens, carpeted with verdant grass, and enamelled with flowers, watered with copious streams, canopied with umbrageous trees, whose branches are loaded with luscious fruit, and thousands of bells of various sizes, suspended from them, at every motion of the breeze give out enchanting music. Their bliss is still further enhanced by the sweetest melody and most harmonious strains from the silver-toned voices of the daughters of paradise. They feed on the most delicious fruits, and drink water from the most beautiful and precious vessels. Clothed in green silk, they enjoy the perpetual company of young and lovely black-eyed maidens, who have all the perfections imagination can conceive, without any of those mental or physical defects so common to those with whom they of earth associate." Here every sense is indeed ministered unto. These physical organs of pleasure are enlarged to a wonderful capacity, and their means for gratification are equally varied and wonderful; but where is the recognition of anything higher than a sensual nature, where the acknowledgment of any deeper wants than those resulting from mere animal life? Can man with a soul, an immortal soul, an earnest, yearning soul, find a heaven in this?

There is yet another people whose spirit-habitation, whose heaven, is in the clouds. There the brave and virtuous are received into aerial palaces, while the wicked, the cowardly, and cruel are excluded from these fair abodes, and condemned to wander, the sport of every breeze. In these "cloud-capped palaces" are different mansions, the principal of which is assigned to persons of distinguished merit and courage — a circumstance which is held out as an inducement for warriors to excel in their profession, and to encourage a spirit of emulation among them. This airy heaven offers no other enjoyments than those the spirit preferred while in the flesh, since the same passions are retained, and the same inclinations,

which prompted and animated in a lower sphere. They imagine an increase of power, having control over the winds and the storms, but none over man.

We notice but one other combination, which is the belief of the Mexican Indians — a form grossly materialistic and repulsive to all fine feelings, but such as we might, perhaps, expect from their untaught, unenlightened minds. The matter and the manner of future happiness, their ideas of the heavenly abode, and how it is reached, are so strangely interwoven, we transcribe them as we find their record on the pages of mythology : —

“The spirits of soldiers who died in battle, or in captivity among their enemies, and those of some others, went to the house of the Sun, whom they considered the Lord of Glory ; and there they led a life of infinite delights, where, every day, at the appearance of the sun’s rays, they hailed his birth with rejoicings and dances, and the sound of voices and instruments accompanied him to his meridian ; then they met with the souls of others, who, with the same festivity, accompanied him to his setting. They next supposed that these spirits, after four years of this glorious life, went to animate clouds, and birds of beautiful feather and sweet song, but were always at liberty to rise again to heaven, or to descend to the earth to warble and suck the flowers.

“The souls of those who were struck by lightning, of those who died by disease, went, with the souls of the children sacrificed to Tlaloc, to a place called Tlalocan, the paradise of that god. This was a cool, shady place, where they had the most delicious repasts, and every other kind of pleasure. All those entitled to a seat in this place were buried, and a rod or bough was placed in their hands, that in that beautiful paradise it might bloom again. The spirits of all those children who had been offered to Tlaloc were believed to be present at all after sacrifices, under the care of a large and beautiful serpent, which serpent at other times was supposed

to inhabit a cave sacred to the water-god in the country of the Mistecas. The entrance was concealed, and the sanctuary was consequently known to but few. It was necessary, first, to crawl the space of a musket-shot, and then to walk through a path, sometimes broad and sometimes narrow, for a mile, before the great dome was reached. This was seventy feet long, and forty feet wide. Here were the idol and the altar, the former being merely a rude column of stalactite, and the other a rock of the same mineral. The ways of the cave were so intricate that many who had unwarily bewildered themselves in it, perished, and were said to have been eaten by the serpent.

"It was not without some dangers that the favored spirits arrived at the mansion of the Sun, where their celestial happiness was to begin. In the hands of these, when dead, the priests of Mesitli placed six aloe leaves, marked with mystic characters, on one of which was to be the passport through the six perils that awaited them. The first was that of the falling mountains, between which those who passed would be, if not supernaturally protected, crushed to pieces. Through these the road lay, and also through the path of the great serpent. This was the second trial. Darting lightning from his eyes, and vibrating a tongue of fire, he seized on and devoured all who were not provided with mystic aloe leaves. The next danger was from crossing the river of the crocodile, where that monstrous animal was as dangerous as the great serpent. The fourth was the passage of the eight deserts; the fifth was that of the eight hills; and the sixth, the windy plain, in which the mountains were blown up by the roots. After this the way was easy, and the Temple of the Sun opened to receive the happy conquerors."

In all this, which seems to us so like superstition and folly, there are, nevertheless, indications of the good and true — faint lines of the gospel system, obscured, indeed, by the thick shadows fallen upon them, but sending forth a ray here and

there that makes us conclude the Sun of righteousness was directing the minds of his straying children from behind the clouds. There appear the struggles of mind for the perfect, a conviction that "through tribulation," through much discipline, the soul must be fitted for entrance into the regions of the blessed. We notice the acknowledgment of superiority of being, with exclusive right to control the celestial world, and also to limit the period of time assigned to it; but to select the true from so much that is untrue is like searching for diamonds on a very uncertain shore. How grateful to turn from this to the sight of that pure and radiant gem, Christianity, which shines with no borrowed lustre! How delightful to turn from these false hopes, these bowers and groves that some make heaven, to the substantial foundations, the New Jerusalem of the gospel! Here the heart and the soul can rest, and exult. A heathen heaven may have enchanting vales, and much to please the fancy, suit the taste, and regale the eye; but there is no place that combines so much of beauty and joy as the Christian's heaven. The heaven of the philosopher may have something that is inviting, something to be appreciated; but in surpassing glory the Scripture heaven transcends them all.

What pen can describe the Holy City — the New Jerusalem? Where is fit language for description? John saw it in holy vision, and heard things concerning it, that kindled the fervor of his seraphic spirit, and set his soul aglow with unutterable emotion; but he exhausted all the richness of mortal dialect in the vain attempt to make the glory conceivable. He gathered choicest and costliest symbols in richest profusion, that he might give to titled sons an idea of their inheritance; but the poverty of words is too great to portray it, and the overpowered spirit exclaims, after all attempts to speak its praise, "It passeth understanding." "Come, Lord Jesus," as if he would enter into the possession of so blessed an estate, is the prayer of his enraptured soul, as he surveys the glorious prospect. What the New Jerusalem was, and will ever be, to the beloved disciple,

so it is, and will ever be, to the true and faithful Christian. He may stand long watching and waiting to discern the tops of the heavenly heights; but the time of reward and release will come; the clouds will break away, the mists be dispelled, and the encircling glory of Paradise appear; like John he may be "carried away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and be showed that great city, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God;" and moreover, have this assurance, that there is no more going out forever. What a contrast here to the pagan heaven we have been considering! There was a going out there—a fearful going out, since there was no pleasing hope of anything—rather a termination, an unhappy end of all things. If the gates of the Holy City, on "golden hinges turning," open to admit the earth-weary travellers, there is no fear that they will ever be opened to shut them out. It is an abiding city—O, blessed consolation to the tired pilgrim who has wandered long in his journey thither! He has, it may be, passed through many a devious way, through many thorny and rugged paths, but there are no such places in the heavenly city. None will ever weary of pacing the streets of the New Jerusalem. The garnished walls and the pearly gates are close around them, and there is no danger, or weariness, or fear. O, what a blessed heaven is that which God prepares for his children! It is worthy of the God whom the Bible reveals. The children of men in all ages have wanted a heaven, and they have borrowed all the imagery of earth to make one; but holiness and blessed permanence belong alone to the eternal abode of the ransomed ones of the Lord. Nowhere else is there so much of glory as here. "And I saw no temple therein," said the delighted gazer, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

"And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it."

Everything that can possibly minister to pleasure, everything that in any way can delight the soul, is made to cluster around the home of the Christian — around heaven. There every idea of felicity is fully met. There is ample provision for the varied wants and woes of human kind. In order to make it attractive, some must needs find one thing, and some another; and God, in anticipation of this, has poured out satisfaction, with an unsparing hand, through all the regions of the blessed, and says to all his followers, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." And what a kingdom! Why is there no more longing to take the crown and begin the reign? No more eagerness to obtain a deed, and thus secure the inheritance?

How often the Bible describes it in this manner — as an "eternal inheritance" — one that is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away;" "an inheritance among all them which are sanctified," "the inheritance of the saints in light." To the poor journeying on, exiles from their Father's house, how inspiring is this figure! How beautiful and attractive it must have seemed to God's ancient people, in their weary years of banishment and wandering in the desert! Amid all the sorrows of long-deferred hopes, they kept in view a promised land, around which all desire centred, all their affections gathered, and all effort was directed. Canaan was the object of their hearts, and thither their steps tended. Its possession was their whole ambition, and it came to be considered the type of heaven; "and they gazed at the land of their hopes beyond the skies through its lovely images. This was the picture, yonder was the reality. This was the shadow, yonder was the substance. This was the earthly, yonder was the heavenly Canaan — the true inheritance."

So with Christian exiles now. Earth may offer a temporary

Canaan, pleasant in its attractions, inviting in many aspects, and we may rejoice in the security of the title we possess ; but there is no inheritance like the one above ; there is no land like the immortal land.

The places here may "flow with milk and honey," but dearer, richer sweets are flowing there, in streams, too, that refresh and gladden the soul continually, preserving a spirit-vigor and freshness that seem strangely beautiful to us who mourn the languor and feebleness of time-decaying powers. There is no blight, no decay there, in the Paradise of God ; and this is another name the Scriptures give to heaven, applied, it may be, in allusion to the original Paradise which God prepared for man in Eden — that home of unspotted innocence and undimmed loveliness, that spot which combined more of beauty and gladness than any portion of earth ever did, or ever will. Everything that was pleasant to the sight or the taste was abundant there. It was a garden of special delights. All that we know of delicious odors, and delicate perfumes, was more fully known by those who felt the breezes as they swept through those newly-planted groves. What sounds, what exquisite melody, fell upon their ears ! What peace pervaded the hearts of the inhabitants of Eden ! What ecstasy filled their souls ! They lived in Paradise. The place was lost, the title was lost in the miserable fall, and the inheritance passed out of their hands, and they went forth into the dreary, dark wilderness outside, to be haunted by the image of their loved and lost home. In their hours of sorrow and days of distress they never forgot the place they had left ; and when their injured God beheld with pity, and promised to provide a way through which they might regain purity and peace, then what hopes were born, what emotions stirred ! We marvel not if everything that was tender, joyous, and sweet was awakened in their inmost souls at the mention of a Paradise to come. Now, heaven, under the figure of Paradise, stood in contrast, in their minds, with the desolate earth around them, upon which they

could see, in all directions, the marks of the curse, in the form of thorns and thistles, of barrenness and blight. What picture could be presented to the hopes of a nature-loving and imaginative Oriental heart more attractive than that which sacred tradition drew of that rural abode of innocence and love which was lost by sin? The devout Jewish shepherd, while watching his flock picking the scanty sod, or while leading them from place to place, in painful search of better pasture, or the husbandman, while toiling in the sweat of his face to obtain his bread from the earth, would look in hopeful smiles through the tears of his toil toward that land, which, like the Paradise of old, yields spontaneously; where trees of richest foliage and of most delicious fruit invite the eye; and which, while they drop their fruit upon the earth, at the same time cover those who gather it with their shelter and their shade. Whether they regarded this representation of heaven as figurative or literal, it was alike true in its substance, and alike pleasant to their faith and hope. How home-like, how full of touching associations, as connected with the past, and how full of promise, was the hope that what was lost on earth would be found in heaven!

The same hopes that animated the Jewish shepherds and the weary laborers of olden time, still encourage the toil-worn Christian in his life vocations. Earth may be sterile, the fruits of enjoyment few; but he sees Paradise—he expects it; and he knows in the fruitfulness of that region he will find full compensation for all that has been denied him here.

The joys of that place, who can tell them? How sweetly they beam upon the dying believer! "Earth is beautiful," said one, "but the Paradise to which I am going is infinitely more so. The flowers here are very fair, but they are not like the fadeless ones I shall see there."

Who can tell what fair creations may skirt the borders of that crystal stream which flows through the heavenly Jerusa-

lem; what wondrous beauty may adorn that life-giving tree that stands on "either side" of the "pure river"? Sayest thou that the "river" and the "tree" are figurative? Is it so? Whoso shall

"reach the heavenly plains,
And walk the golden streets,"

shall find enough of beauty and of joy to satisfy the finest perceptions and the keenest desire. When the massy gates of Paradise are thrown open, and the shining host shout the "welcome home," the spirit thus received will then know the blessedness of its home. Not until then will it be fully known. There may be glimpses, but they will be as pleasant dreams; there may be delightful views in times of unwonted clearness of vision, but they will be transient and imperfect—an earnest of the true, but not the blissful, reality. When

"On the green and flowery mount
Our weary souls shall sit,
And with transporting joy recount,
The labors of our feet,"—

when we look out with spirit eyes upon the transporting scene that is spread before us, — we shall, at least, be conscious that rivers of delight pour through the soul, and that crystal streams of pleasure are flowing on every side.

"Jordan rolled between" the Jews and their inheritance: so we have a Jordan to pass, before we reach the "shining shore," and enter the heavenly Canaan — the Paradise of God. We stand and shrink to feel the threatening waves, calling the stream narrow, dark, and cold; but why does not the view beyond make us willing — yea, even anxious — to plunge into the river, that we may sooner range the blessed country on the other side?

"Our Father's house" is in the New Jerusalem; rather it is the New Jerusalem itself. Is there no joy in this? Lone wanderers from broken households, sick at heart and heavy in spirit, what think ye of a Father's house? Is it not the

heart-centre — the place where the sun shines brightest, birds sing sweetest, and flowers blossom fairest, the oasis in the world, the greenest spot on earth, the place where everything is best? In all the world there is no joy like that of going home, and no sorrow like that of having none to go to. When this comes, and homeless is the word that we see inscribed upon everything, is there no joy in thinking the "house" above is never closed, and the circle there is never broken? "I'm going home to my Father's house," said an aged Christian; and the light that was kindled in his eye told the joy that was welling up in his soul at the prospect. How much was comprised, how much was anticipated! Our Father's house! O, blessed place! Homeless Christian, you have a home above, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," where every good centres, and every pleasure reigns.

"Be of good cheer," then; the door is ajar, and the welcome is waiting. There is no discord in that loving household, for the Head is love, and the members have the same spirit. It is a peaceful dwelling, our Father's house. The house is in a city; or the city itself is the house. It is a holy city, and therefore a pleasant and happy city. Those who walk the beautiful streets see nothing, hear nothing, to trouble and pain them.

It is a "continuing city." Those of time vanish away, but permanence is stamped upon everything there. The foundations are sure, defying the touch of decay. The materials of the divine Builder are different from those employed by any other; and the city which has sprung up under his hand is beautiful and glorious, far surpassing all human conception, according to the inspired record. There are no streets like those of the New Jerusalem. There are no mansions like those which tower in solemn grandeur on the heavenly heights. Everything in design and execution is perfect. But where is this place? Where is the Christian's home — the New Je

rusalem? The child thinks of it as "up above the bright blue sky," and the maturest mind knows no more. Each alike asks, Where is it? The child-questionings concerning it are always touching and beautiful.

"I hear thee speak of the better land;
Thou call'st its children a happy band.
Mother, O, where is that radiant shore?
Shall we not seek it, and weep no more?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows?
And the fireflies dance through the myrtle boughs?
Not there, not there, my child!

"Is it where the feathery palm-trees rise,
And the date grows ripe under sunny skies?
Or 'midst the green islands of glittering seas,
Where fragrant forests perfume the breeze,
And strange, bright birds, on their starry wings,
Bear the rich hues of all glorious things?
Not there, not there, my child!

"Is it far away, in some region old,
Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold?
Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
And the diamond lights up the secret mine,
And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand,—
Is it there, sweet mother, that better land?
Not there, not there, my child!

"Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy;
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy;
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair:
Sorrow and death do not enter there;
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom:
Far beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb,
It is there, it is there, my child!"

The precise location of the heavenly world is not fully revealed, nor is it necessary that it should be. Is it not enough to know that it is a state of safety — of eternal blessedness? Is it not enough for the Christian to know that he will ever be with the Lord, in intimate and holy communion, wanting nothing — with "every longing satisfied?" It is certain that revelation is all-sufficient; but speculative minds will draw in-

ferences from Scripture representations, honestly and candidly, it may be, but variously, according to the peculiar character of individual thought. John "saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." A delicate figure; but the widely differing interpretations of the passage only deepen the mystery of its meaning. One sees in it the perfect purity and heavenly origin of the celestial sphere. He beholds its unfading beauty, which makes it an "eternal excellency, a glory;" but its "coming down" only denotes its emanation from the Divine Hand. Another observes unequivocal indications that it refers to the ultimate establishment of a material heaven on this material earth; while still another applies it to the church *militant* in its passage to the *triumphant*. We place no stamp of *right* on either or any of these conclusions, for we know not the place where it is due. There may be doubt and perplexity upon minor points; but the delightful consideration is unshaken, that somewhere in God's realm there is a place of residence for the just — "a world purified from physical and moral evil, and fitted to the renovated faculties of the redeemed."

There are many suppositions as to its locality, some of which we shall notice; but of none can we confidently affirm that it accords with the divine plan. It is thought by many that this orb, which we at present inhabit, is to be the theatre of final action; that "the new heavens and the new earth," wherein the righteous shall dwell, will be formed from this world, which is to be new-modelled, coming forth from the last general conflagration entirely renovated, and expressly fitted for the abode of saints.

Says one of our own writers, Dr. Hitchcock, in his "Religion and Geology," "The prevailing opinion in this country, probably, has been, and still is, that the destruction of the world described by Peter will amount to annihilation — that the matter of the globe will cease to be. But in all ages there have

been many who believed that the destruction will be only the ruin of the present economy of the world, but not its utter extinction. And surely Peter's description does not imply annihilation of the matter of the globe. He makes fire the agent of destruction, and, in order to ascertain the extent of the ruin that will follow, we have only to inquire what effect combustion will have upon matter. The common opinion is, that intense combustion actually destroys or annihilates matter, because it is thereby dissipated. But the chemist knows that no one particle of matter has ever been thus deprived of existence; that fire only changes the form of matter, but never annihilates it. When solid matter is changed into gas, as in most cases of combustion, it seems to be annihilated, because it disappears; but it has only assumed a new form, and exists as really as before.

"Since, therefore, biblical and scientific truth must agree, we may be sure that the apostle never meant to teach that the matter of the globe would cease to be, through the action of fire upon it; nor is there anything in his language that implies such a result, but most obviously the reverse."

Further, he says that Peter, after describing the day of the Lord, "wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," adds, "Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." "Now, the apostle does not here, in so many words, declare that the new heavens and earth will be the present world and its atmosphere, purified and renovated by fire. But it is certainly a natural inference that such was his meaning. For if he intended some other remote and quite different place, why should he call it earth, and especially why should he surround it with an atmosphere? The natural and most obvious meaning of the passage surely is, that the future residence of the righteous will be this present, terraqueous globe, after its entire organic and combustible matter shall have been destroyed, and its whole

mass reduced by heat to a liquid state, and then a new economy reared upon its surface, not adapted to sinful but to sinless beings, and therefore quite different from its present condition—probably more perfect, but still the same earth and surrounding heavens.”

Says Dr. Griffin, “A question arises whether the new heavens and new earth will be created out of the ruins of the old; that is, whether the old will be renovated and restored in a more glorious form; or whether the old will be annihilated, and the new made out of nothing. The idea of the annihilation of so many immense and glorious bodies, organized with inimitable skill, and declarative of infinite wisdom, is gloomy and forbidding. Indeed, it is scarcely credible that God should annihilate any of his works, much less so many and so glorious works. It ought not to be believed without the most decisive proof. On the other hand, it is a most animating thought that this visible creation which sin has marred, which the polluted breath of men and devils has defiled, and which by sin will be reduced to utter ruin, will be restored by our Jesus, will arise from its ruins in tenfold splendor, and shine with more illustrious glory than before it was defaced by sin.

“After a laborious and anxious search for light on this interesting subject, I must pronounce the latter to be my decided opinion. And the same, I find, has been the more common opinion of the Christian fathers, of the divines of the Reformation, and of the critics and annotators who have since flourished. I could produce on this side a catalogue of names which would convince you that this has certainly been the common opinion of the Christian church in every age, as it was also of the Jewish.”

This exposition of the words of Peter is defended by many in the past and present—by Chrysostom, Augustine, Luther, and Wesley, who gives a glowing description of the changes which will take place in the heaven, or the atmosphere about the earth; and he proceeds to say, “Let us take a view of those

changes which we may reasonably suppose will then take place in the earth. It will no more be bound up with intense cold, nor parched up with extreme heat, but will have such a temperature as will be most conducive to its fruitfulness. If, in order to punish its inhabitants, God did of old

‘ Bid his angels turn askance
This oblique globe,’ —

thereby occasioning violent cold on one part, and violent heat on the other, he will, undoubtedly, then order them to restore it to its original position; so that there will be a final end, on the one hand, of the burning heat, which makes some parts of it scarce habitable, and on the other of

‘ The rage of Arctos and eternal frost.’

And it will then contain no jarring or destructive principles within its own bosom. It will no more have any of those violent convulsions in its own bowels. It will no more be shaken or torn asunder by the impetuous force of earthquakes, and will, therefore, need neither Vesuvius nor Etna, nor any burning mountains to prevent them. There will be no more horrid rocks, or frightful precipices; no wild deserts, or barren sands; no impassable morasses or unfruitful bogs to swallow up the unwary traveller. There will, doubtless, be inequalities on the surface of the earth, which are not blemishes, but beauties; there will be everything that can be conducive, in any wise, either to use or pleasure—how far beyond all that the most lively imagination is able to conceive, for the earth shall be a more beautiful Paradise than Adam ever saw!

We might adduce still more authority in support of this theory; but we turn to the brief consideration of other views which have their adherents, though, it may be, not as numerous. Some imagine that among the multiplied globes that now exist in the mighty regions of space, there is some one peculiar and favored, which may be allotted as the permanent and blissful habitation of the just, where above and beyond all contact with

the material, their spirits will dwell securely and at rest. Thither they are transported when done with the duties and discipline of the present, there to remain forever.

Some think a new globe or world will be created, peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of redeemed men, that will be furnished with such munificent beauty, and show such remarkable displays of the divine love and wisdom, that the renovated powers of the ransomed will find ample occasion for their fullest exercise, through an endless eternity.

Others allow a wider scope, granting the heavenly inhabitants power to transport themselves from one world to another, thus discarding permanent locality, and introducing the soul successively to new regions, according to the rapidity with which it exhausts their riches and glory. Whichever or whatever supposition we may adopt, it is conceded that "the general laws which now govern the universe, and the general relations of the great bodies in the universe to each other, will remain, on the whole, unchanged, unless we adopt the unreasonable and extravagant supposition, that the whole frame of Jehovah's empire will be unhinged and overturned, for the sake of our world, which, when compared with the whole system of Nature, is but an indistinguishable atom amidst the immensity of God's works." To quote once more from the author of "Religion and Geology," "The wide-spread opinion that heaven will be a sort of airy Elysium, where the present laws of Nature will be unknown, and where matter, if it exist, can exist only in its most attenuated form, is a notion to which the Bible is a stranger."

But whatever or wherever the New Jerusalem may be, every believer in revelation knows that it is all the most exacting can desire. In reality, it may not coincide with any views which mortals may take; but we know it is blessed and glorious. We look through the glass polished by the inspired workmen, and we have glimpses of shining turrets and lofty battlements, that intimate what a nearer vision might disclose. It is declared to be a happy land, "an abiding city;" and abiding happiness is

our highest ideal of good. There are few but what covet an entrance into this heavenly Jerusalem, "the city of the living God;" and Jesus, the "King of saints," stands ready to give a title to the inheritance unto all who are truly desirous of gaining the possession, and who are ready to observe the conditions he has instituted. Many have walked the humblest vales of poverty all their lives long, incurring hardship and persecution, and yet have been happy and exultant, because of the prospect of dwelling at last in the peaceful city of God.

How many of the sons and daughters of affliction have felt their burdens lightened, by heaven-born hopes of a final and joyous release from all in the bright clime of the blest!

How many sorrowing and bereaved ones have dried their tears, and comforted themselves with the thought of glad reunions in the tearless land above, and how many homeless ones have withheld their sighs at sight of that better home within the gates of the New Jerusalem! Well might the pious soul exclaim,—

"O world of bliss, could mortal eyes,
But half thy charms explore,
How would our spirits long to rise,
And dwell on earth no more!"

Surely it may be written, Blessed are the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem; blessed are all they who find heaven, "for they shall go no more out forever."

CHAPTER XVIII.

HEAVEN AS A PLACE.

Natural Ideas associated with Place. — Analogies. — Christ's Teachings. — Spiritual Discernment. — Jewish Faith. — Soul's Constitution demands Place. — Opinions of Harbaugh. — Bliss of Heaven sufficient to satisfy the Soul's utmost Demands.

There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Eternal day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain." — *Watts*.

ALL the bright visions of childhood with regard to heaven are of a beautiful place. Everything that is fair and lovely is associated with it, and the childish imagination sees the infantile soul that passes away, revelling in scenes of the happy land where the good dwell. But the thought of a better place has entered into the conceptions of maturer years perhaps more frequently; but there are those who would allow the celestial inheritance no "local habitation," who would have the significance of heaven to rest merely upon condition or state. Heaven is in the soul, a germ that is to expand into full flower, the perfection of which is to constitute infinite blessing; life and its discipline emerging into a peaceful, satisfying state, where the soul may repose, and where, like the flower's fragrance on the breath of summer morn, it may yield its grateful tribute to Him who formed it.

We notice some considerations in regard to both place and state; but, as we have said before, no merely human conception is at all adequate for the full understanding or appreciation of heaven. This is reserved for the ransomed spirit to experience

when it is disrobed of mortality, and sees as it is seen, and knows as it is known. If we call heaven a place, and are summoned to answer to its characteristics, we reply, we cannot do so; but because the finite fails to tell the modes of the infinite, does not prove that heaven is not a place. We have never seen a daguerrotype of heaven, so that we can describe its peculiar features. The great Photographer has traced clear and fadeless outlines, but the filling up remains unfinished. Another spring must be touched, and another side of the case opened, before we can look upon the complete picture in all its perfectness and beauty — before we can see the wondrous glory and dignity of heavenly expression.

We cannot tell the actual scenery of heaven. We talk of heavenly hills, peaceful vales, of flowers, fruits, and streams; but we cannot tell aught of one or the other, save that they glide into our thoughts, and nestle down in the place of anticipation, as among the things that are to be realized, in the day of heavenly revelation, to every soul that has a passport to the celestial land. We find delightful images in the Bible, and we are of necessity influenced much by analogies and hints that nature furnishes, so that we invariably find ourselves transferring whatever is fair and whatever we love below to the place above. "Analogies lie in wait at every angle, at every turning of the road, reclining on mossy banks, sporting in running streams, sailing on radiant clouds. Every object offers wings to a fairer land. There are days in every year in which the thoughtful soul is conscious of a fulness of being. The faculties are quickened into supernatural life. The sky then wears a purer, clearer, deeper blue; the clouds soar to a loftier height. They are no longer vapors exhaled from earth, but flakes of beauty let loose from heaven."

There is music in the air, music in the soul, unwritten, unarticulated too, but the heart is filled with it. Not *Æolian* strains alone, which, beautiful as they are, are often, like generalizations, too broad to touch the chords of human hearts,

but also home-like variations on every cherished memory, and hallowed "tones of soul, gathered by the great Master into a grand concert of all harmonious things." What Christian has not had hours like these, when he has felt like "singing himself away to everlasting bliss;" when light has fallen upon the features of his heavenly home, and he has discovered a glory that was unutterable? He has stood, as it were, by the gates of the holy city, and heard the sweet-toned melody of angel bands — the chorus of the redeemed, until he has himself longed to join "the harpers," and send forth a jubilant anthem to the praise of Him who gloriously redeems; who hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and gathered around it a blessed company, who know nothing but joy and love. He looks around in the world he inhabits, and everything speaks of God. He sees how, here and there, he has touched with his finger and brought forth forms of inimitable beauty, and he has said within himself, —

"If God has made this world so fair,
Where sin and death abound,
How beautiful beyond compare
Will Paradise be found!"

If this earth, which is the abode of fallen, apostate man, — a universal scene of moral depravity, — if this present a beautiful and variegated prospect "of lofty mountains, romantic dells, and fertile plains; meandering rivers, transparent lakes, and spacious oceans; verdant landscapes, adorned with fruits and flowers, and a rich variety of the finest colors, and a thousand other beauties and sublimities that are strewed over the face of nature, — how grand and magnificent a scenery may we suppose must be presented to the view in that world where moral evil has never entered to derange the harmony of the Creator's works, — where love to the Supreme, and to one another, fires the bosom of all the inhabitants, producing a rapturous exultation, and an incessant adoration of the Source of happiness!"

We may justly conclude that the scenery of such a world must be inconceivably beautiful, — grand of itself, but, in a peculiar sense, fair to the soul, by reason of its purified vision, and that it is characterized by infinite diversity; so that there will be no weariness in the gaze, though it be prolonged through ages that are eternal. We shall then be living under a different economy from that we know now. There must be an entire change, it is very evident. If there be a material heaven and a material economy, the governing laws must indeed be different, at least so far as to prevent accident and dis-harmony. Now, with our present organization, the elements are oftentimes hostile to man; but there it is expressly declared that "nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all the holy mountain;" that "there shall be no more sea," or sun, and yet all shall be very fresh and very bright. Says one, in speaking of the endless variety of scenery in the heavenly place, "How this can be without those changes which now are inseparable from decay, we are unable to conceive. If there be no decay, how can there be a renewal of vegetation? And if no renewal of vegetation, apparently there can be no succession of the seasons. And as our present enjoyment, and even our life itself, are completely formed upon the succession of the seasons, it becomes entirely plain that there must be a change so radical and so entire as to baffle all attempts to grasp the actual future."

Doubtless this is so. Heaven transcends all imagination. Whatever it be, it is God's creation, and as far as God exceeds our poor comprehension, so far does the prepared place exceed our highest thought. We have enough to establish a perfect conviction of its reality. This unquestionable design is revealed in the gorgeous description of John, when the appeal is made to everything that is within us which responds to the love of "form, color, order, and architecture."

"I do not in the least doubt," says the author last quoted, "that heaven is, to all intents and for all our needs, a place;

but I cannot name the properties which constitute it such, nor is there any occasion to do so. To my apprehension, it is enough to conceive of it as meeting the uses of the heavenly life as perfectly, and even more perfectly, than place now meets the uses of this present life."

Says another, in his attempts to harmonize Scripture and astronomy with regard to this subject, "Heaven is a place, and not merely a state; it has locality, and is material. We have found, not only that the existence of an outward heavenly place is possible, but also that the deepest investigations of science make it quite probable, and render it entirely unnecessary for us to evaporate into mythological mist-images the bright heaven of the Bible, with the view of harmonizing the discoveries of astronomy and the teachings of faith. The Holiest Place — the Salem of peace and rest, — we have not seen; but we have seen golden festal lamps hung out on high; our eyes have traced bright avenues stretching in long perspective toward a place which eye hath not seen; we have discovered bright points, as it were minarets, of a celestial city, blaze high up in the realms of eternal sunshine; we have heard harmonies as if from happy worshipping worlds afar; and the aspirations of our longing hearts have gazed earnestly and hopefully into regions of changeless, pure, peaceful, and everlasting rest. If this is not the home of our sainted friends, we are still not sad; for we know that then it is one brighter, holier, lovelier, and better still. Yet "tell not the pilgrim, who is journeying through the dark night, that those tents afar, from which such a friendly light shines invitingly toward him, are empty, tenantless, and cold!"

When Christ was about to go away from his disciples, he comforted their mourning hearts by saying, "I go to prepare a place for you." In that place are "many mansions," says the Saviour, and those mansions are to be the home for saints of all ages, "not for these alone" whom he addresses, but for them also which shall believe on him. This assurance has sent a thrill of

joy through myriad hearts since the days when Jesus traversed the hills of Judea, teaching these things of the kingdom; and multitudes have departed this life with great joy, having seen "the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God," ready to receive them, and introduce them to the promised rest. They went, expecting a better place, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest," where they shall dwell in peace and know no sin. And yet there are those who tell us that these expectations are not based upon the Bible; that all these descriptions of heaven are figurative; that they are a necessity of speech for our dull apprehension; that our comprehension is so feeble that we must have to do with the external and the tangible, and therefore it is that heaven is thus presented.

Our apprehensions are dull, and our comprehension is limited; but know we not such a thing as spiritual discernment? The commonest matters of Christian experience are hidden things, until the scales of carnality are removed, and our minds are illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

What was dim and mysterious before is clear and simple afterward. What existed before in faint outline now takes on a form of beautiful and well-defined proportion. It is not that the things themselves are changed, but there is a penetrating, spiritual vision, that discerns differently. Doubtless there is much that is figurative in the Bible descriptions of heaven; the gorgeous symbols pertaining to it are only caskets; but to these has not the humble, faithful Christian a divinely-intrusted key, by which he unlocks the gateway to the eternal, discovering what none others see? There is a God-given discernment which reveals things to the soul clearly; and what is plain to one thus blessed is dark and never understood by another that believes it not. What we need is, a clear eye of faith — a purified, spiritual vision — to know, and understand, and appreciate the Christian's heaven — the place which God hath prepared for those who love him. We need "a heart in

full and earnest sympathy with the powers of the world to come—a heart whose faith will annihilate time, space, and death, and summon the substance of things hoped for right round it.”

Then will the reality of heaven come home to the waiting soul, and amid the types, figures, and shadows will be delightfully embosomed the placid region of undisturbed rest, to which it is steadily and surely tending. Such a one perceives the new and coming economy, and rejoices that he himself is the subject of one so perfect. He has spiritual discernment; and sayings which to some are dark and dead, or at best but uncertain sound, are to him “voices from a better land, which pour their rich and refreshing melody into his heart.” To the pious Jew, under the ancient dispensation, the ceremonial observances were a prefiguration of good things to come, while the unbeliever saw only a tedious and meaningless round of dull performance. To the one the blood that flowed at the foot of the altar was replete with life-giving properties, while to the other it was but the ordinary shedding of the blood of an indifferent creature. In the great day of atonement, the one saw no significance in the slain lamb, while the other looked down the long vista of years, and beheld the meek and uncomplaining Sufferer of Calvary, that sin-atonement Lamb, which, “once for all,” was to die for the sins of the people, rendering no other sacrifice necessary, forever abolishing the ceremonial in “the new and living way” appointed. It was the eye of faith that saw these “rainbows of promise” in that sombre and cloud-cast sky; that beheld the Divine Wisdom revealed in those dim symbols. So by this same source are we to obtain glimpses of the promised land. Moses heard of Canaan. He thought of it, he sought it, and from the mount he looked out upon it. The Bible tells us of heaven, and it gives us many Pisgah heights, from which we may look over the fair heritage of the saints—a view which has led many to exclaim, “I am now ready to be offered;” “Now let-

test thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

"O Canaan, bright Canaan, my soul still pants for thee."

However strong faith may be, there is nevertheless an idea of a local, material, tangible heaven associated with all the views and inquiries of the Christian. When he thinks of heaven, he thinks of a *place*, and in his own mind invests it with everything that enters into his conceptions of a holy place. When he hopes for heaven, it is for a place that is exempt from the changes and the sin incident to mortal life. This, indeed, is not inconsistent with *state*, and we are wont to speak of a heavenly state, characterized by this blessed exemption; but at the same time *place* is, as it were, the substratum of our thoughts and hopes.

In following out these considerations further, we avail ourselves of the opinions of Harbaugh, as expressed in his "Sainted Dead."

"A strong presumptive evidence for the locality of heaven," he says, "is furnished by enlightened reason. The soul is constitutionally interwoven with an external world throughout all its mundane history. The mind or spirit develops itself in this connection, and in its very texture it is intertwined with the forms of time and space. It rests, if not necessarily (though this, I think — not, however, in a materialistic sense — might be confidently affirmed), yet by a powerful habit, upon matter; and this habit is not an incidental state, but it is the only state of existence with which the soul was acquainted from the first dawn of its consciousness. To tear the spirit suddenly loose, at death, from these relations to an external world, and place it in a state completely and forever isolated from all matter, where it would find no opportunity to exercise these faculties, would be subjecting it to a terrible violence — a violence which would destroy its personal identity.

"The faculties of the soul are necessarily dependent, for a healthful exercise of their energies, upon an external world.

A moment's reflection will convince us of this. Reason steps from one deduction to another, by the aid of analogies which it finds in the world without, so that it is dependent on the external world for the exercise of its strength. The mind, in reasoning, cannot divest itself of analogies. Imagination must have a real world in which to range; the material with which it builds it gets from the material world. All it can do is to combine; it cannot create. Memory must find a backward track through time and space, or it is dead. All these faculties are supplied with materials to keep them in life and vigor, through the senses, from an external world. Shall these faculties be cut off from their sources and conditions, and die? No, reason must exist in the future life, to approve the dealings of God with the soul, and to adjudge him praise for his goodness. Memory must wander back to earth, to remind the soul forever of its obligations to the Saviour who redeemed it from the sink of sin; and when it does travel back, imagination must be the wing to bear it." So much in connection with reason, in anticipation of the place of the saints. We say not that it is impossible but that a change may be wrought so entire and effectual that there will remain no necessity, no room, for this external dependence. "All things are possible with God." There is no limit to his power, and doubtless he *might* exercise it in a way that he never will. We cannot tell; we only say that it is easier and better for us to dwell upon probabilities, as supported by reason and Scripture, than to speculate upon possibilities, which have their origin in our own minds, and consequently are very doubtful things.

"Where I am ye shall be also," says Christ; and this *where* may indicate a place. "It could not be a suitable place for the saints, if it were not a local, material heaven. The saints will have bodies. Pure spirits, for aught we know, exist differently; but the saints, having bodies, must have a material dwelling-place, because they are material. Can the abode of these bodies be less tangible than the bodies themselves? Certainly

not. They cannot be suspended in air or float in space eternally. Though the bodies of the saints will be, in some respects, no doubt, greatly changed,—for ‘we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump,’—and they will be spiritualized in a way now unknown to us, yet they will be bodies still. ‘There is a spiritual body.’ Job felt confident that he should, in his flesh, see God. A human being consists of soul and body, the one material and the other immaterial; these two united make the man, and they must therefore be united again in the future world, if the man is to retain his nature. The body will be raised, and become a sharer with the spirit in the blessed gift of immortality. Whatever will be the refinement of this immortal man,—though raised in honor, in power, in incorruption, in spirituality, yet he has a body, and must therefore have a local platform, a physical substratum, for his future habitation.”

In the language of another, “According to the New Testament, man will possess a body even in the future life, and continue to be, as he now is, a being composed of both sense and reason; and so there, as well as here, he will have the want of something cognizable by the senses. We look, therefore, for a house, a home, a heavenly paternal home, a peopled residence, a real habitation, where we shall know one another, and be with one another upon terms of the most intimate friendship and the dearest fellowship.”

The earthly Paradise was a *place*. There was no sin there. God prepared and furnished it according to his own pattern, and placed the happy and innocent pair in the midst of fruits and flowers, and beautiful scenery, where the sweet echoes of their own voices were full of pleasure, and undefaced beauty smiled upon everything. If God prepared a place like this for his innocent ones on earth, may he not also do likewise for the ransomed ones, in bringing them to the heavenly Paradise, and showing them richer landscapes and more delightful scenery

than even Eden afforded? The earthly is the type of the heavenly, "and it must needs be that the pattern of heavenly things on earth should have some similarity to their substance in heaven."

Like, and yet how *unlike*! The sun shone upon Eden, but the Paradise above is sunless, and yet inconceivably bright. The evening and the morning were known in the garden where Adam and Eve dwelt, and day and night alternated as now; but there will be no night and no darkness in heaven. Better than all, the tempter will never be there to lure with his enticing words, and the fair heritage will never be blighted with sin. It is a guarded place, a holy place, and "nothing that defileth" shall ever enter in; so that, through all the blessed region, there shall be nothing but beauty and harmony, nothing but peace, and perfect love. The pearly gates never open to receive any but the pure and the good, and the mansions are never inhabited save by the loyal subjects of the heavenly King; so that delightful tranquillity pervades the whole realm, and the most perfect sympathy is always and forever manifest. The emotions which incite one to bow before the great white throne, in adoring gratitude, are the same that move the mighty multitude to shout the praises of the Lamb.

How blessed a thought that there is one place, one world, where order, harmony, and sympathy are perfect; where there are no differences and contentions, no jarrings and confusion!

"No rude alarms of raging foes,
No cares to break the long repose,
No midnight shade, no clouded sun,
But sacred, high, eternal noon."

For such a place how natural to suppose a careful preparation would be needed, and that every one would be solicitous to make it! Well might Jesus exclaim, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" To lose the soul is to lose heaven, and to lose heaven is to lose God, and everything that is most valuable and dear. Earth

and time will pass away, and the place that now knows us will soon know us no more ; but we know that Jesus hath prepared a place, for he has told us ; and we know that it is one of infinite blessedness, for he has told us this also ; and, moreover, that it is accessible to all. It is, and yet it is not, an exclusive place. All may enter if they will ; and yet they will not, because they refuse to observe the conditions by which it is gained.

Just without a certain city is a beautiful and extensive flower garden. The walks are laid out with scrupulous exactness, and the borders are tended with the nicest care. Rich and rare flowers may be seen, and plants of the choicest variety, among which is a murmuring fountain, making soft, sweet music, which, together with the beauty clustering around, render it a very attractive place. The gardener holds the key, and is pleased to admit those who come to admire and appreciate his efforts, while he persistently refuses entrance to those who have evidently other motives in view. And we call this just, and it is. He values his labor and its results, and it is right that he should. He cares for his "vineyard," and it is a wise prudence that he shows.

God values heaven, for it has cost him much. He has been at infinite pains to prepare the celestial garden, and who can say that he has not a right to hold the key — a perfect right to admit or exclude, according as he sees a fitness or unfitness? He does welcome those who come to appreciate what he has done, and he shows them all his richest and rarest things, and how so much beauty and perfection were gained.

O, who can tell the beauty of the garden of the Lord — the trees of righteousness which his hand hath planted? Who can tell what it will be to stand in the shadow of the "tree of life," and look out upon the fair borders of Paradise — to stretch forth the hand and pluck the life-giving fruit, which sends a grateful sensation through the whole refined and spiritual being?

Whatever heaven may be, we know it is rich in everything that can gladden and bless the soul. "Measureless affluence" is written upon everything that it contains, and upon every joy that thrills the beatified spirit there is traced, in fadeless characters, "forever and ever." There exists the freshness of immortality, and happiness is a perpetual stream; but we need other dialect than that we know to speak the fullness of heavenly blessing.

To win it is the work of life; and who would count it dear, although a lifetime of suffering be the price to be paid for it? It has been said that

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone,"

will lead to the blest abode; and who would not be willing to wade these dark seas, if the goodly prospect is only thus reached? We may shrink at "the waves and the billows," but a little farther on and there is "no more sea," and no more sorrow. "Heaven's long age of bliss shall pay" for all God's children will suffer here. It will fully compensate for all experience of woe in the mortal life. When we dwell, happy saints, —

"High in yonder realms of light," —

it will be enough to feel that our place is where God is, and that our heaven will always be in his presence. We shall stay where he bids us stay, with infinite delight; go where he bids us go, with joyful steps, and engage in whatever he calls us to with inexpressible satisfaction, for we shall be willing subjects of the heavenly King, and serve him continually, with an interest ever fresh and ever new.

"All hail! ye fair, celestial shores,
Ye lands of endless day;
Swift on my view your prospect pours,
And drives my griefs away."

CHAPTER XIX.

HEAVEN AS A STATE.

Man never satisfied with Revelation. — Platonic Notion. — Senses the natural Channel of Activity. — Heart-sentiments superior to Place. — Illustrations drawn from Blind and Deaf. — Poet Imagery. — Heaven to be sought.

“And what if much be still unknown?
The Lord shall teach us that,
When we shall stand before his throne,
Or sit as Mary sat.

“Wait till he shall himself disclose
Things now beyond our reach,
Nor list to those who e’er profess
God’s secret ways to teach.” — *Hind.*

THE Bible-revealed heaven is a blessed object of hope to all Christian pilgrims who are conscious of nearing the height of immortality, and are anxious to exchange their dusty and sin-stained robes for the peculiar drapery of those who walk there. But, notwithstanding all allusions and descriptions, mankind are not yet quite satisfied with revelation. They do not know whether heaven is a place or a state, and they speculate upon the likelihood of one and the probabilities of the other: but, after all, they must leave the subject where they found it, and wait “until He himself shall disclose,” meantime comforting themselves with the assurance that his own shall eventually behold his glory, where he is.

We glance, however, at some of the considerations by which those are influenced who deny the locality of a material heaven, and maintain that it is simply a state, having no reference to time and place, — as we are accustomed to speak of a state of

freedom or the contrary. Feeling and enjoyment are retained, and somehow these are fed, ministered unto, and the source of supply constitutes heaven. It may be, indeed, the impalpable something of an exquisite joy; but when we come to definiteness, to a basis, we feel all things, as it were, retiring, shrinking away before the intangible being; "Faith, the substance of things hoped for," becomes shadowy, and the spirit-realm so abstract, so entirely disconnected with all which mind at present grasps, that an idea of it can scarcely be formed.

Upon this ground, the materialist and the rationalist are wont to tread, and here and there are eminences upon which reason climbs to look out upon the ethereal region. From these points, and from such data as reason furnishes, they tell us of "that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns." If from want of clear spiritual perception they fail to see the distinct outline of a heavenly country, they theorize upon matter and spirit, and finally settle down with a heaven of their own, introducing or excluding the material, as best suits their ideas. There may be the recognition of a certain sort of spiritual element with some, but in most cases everything is so entirely separated from all which is tangible to the senses, that mystery is doubly written upon its front.

At one period of history, and under the influence and teachings of a leading mind, it came to be considered that matter is essentially evil, and that the highest good of which man is capable is to be removed from any and every connection with it. To be rid once and forever of the fetters and entanglements of the flesh was thought the supreme good, and that thereafter the spirit was to be no more subject to such thralldom. True, there will be no such thing as bondage in heaven. Let destiny assume what form it may, there will be the most delightful freedom; and to insure this, who shall say that the spirit must necessarily be shut off from all connection with the external and the material? Do we not know that the latter may exist, "more refined in its constitution, more delicate in its combinations, and consequently

more beautiful and glorious in its construction and appearance," than anything of which we have now any conception, and instead of being a hinderance, become a most essential aid in the guidance of the spirit in its future and heavenly course?

God has been pleased to institute the fine senses as the medium through which the spirit communicates with the external world, during its season of discipline and development upon earth. These are the channels through which are conveyed all that interests and influences it, and hence the activity by which the uniform habits of the mind are directed and controlled. It becomes accustomed to act in this way. There is no other way for it to act, and if these avenues are to be closed at death, or after the departure of the spirit from this world, if there is to be a final cessation of these things, it follows there must be a new creation, a new mental constitution, in order to secure adaptation to the new sphere — fitness for a new method.

But so far as we know, there is not the shadow of a reason for us to suppose that death works any change upon the mental constitution. Reason, memory, imagination, and all the divinely wrought faculties of the soul, there is reason to believe, far outlast the fleeting breath. The "rich man" remembered and felt in the abode to which he found himself transported when he left earth and time. He saw and reasoned, and gave utterance to his thoughts and desires. "To tear the spirit suddenly loose, at death," says Harbaugh, "from these relations to an external world, and place it in a state completely, and for ever, isolated from all matter, where it would find no opportunity to exercise these faculties, would be subjecting it to a terrible violence — a violence which would destroy its personal identity."

But to proceed to other considerations employed by those who think that heaven is a condition, we find that which we term absent-mindedness to be used as proof of such a belief; that this shows how one may be in a life superior to, and independent of, mere locality.

One may be so entirely engrossed in things above him, or at

a distance from him, as to be utterly indifferent, yea, quite regardless of anything about him ; so that, for the time being, he is living away as really among the scenes he imagines as if his surroundings were visibly different, corresponding with those in his mind's eye.

The life is independent of the body. The thoughts and affections are wandering where they choose, unconfined by physical boundaries ; and if any one break the spell, and restore the consciousness of present actualities, the heart's response is, "I only stay here ; home is where the affections are." Hence it is said that one may be constantly living where they are not ; because the mind leads the man, and works out the problem of existence, making the state of feeling of immeasurably greater interest than all which invests present inhabited place.

So, when friends are far away, among scenes that are strange to us, the place where they are is not of much interest or importance to us, compared with what we feel when we receive the communication which reveals the inner thoughts and purposes of the soul, and tells with what feelings and hopes they look out upon what is about them. Thus the homes of the great and the gifted are never so attractive as when associated with the sentiments and aspirations of those who dwelt there, telling how and for what they lived. It is not the gorgeousness of richly furnished apartments, nor the massiveness of architecture, not the simplicity of rustic ways, nor any of these things that particularly command admiration and interest, but the vital energy of soul which infused itself into everything. It is this which hallows such places. One might talk forever of the homes of Cowper and Milton without awaking that enthusiasm which attaches itself to the recital of the inspiring strains which came warm from their hearts, full of the promptings of their inner life. It is these which lend a charm to the places where they lived, toiled, and died. It is this which surrounds them with so many pleasing associations,

inviting the wise and good to resort hither as to a holy shrine. No, place is not everything. The mind is not wholly dependent upon the external; but who does not know that a large part of enjoyment comes from this source? The Creator has made a world, and peopled it with forms of beauty. He has given us senses to appreciate them, thus opening a source of happiness to all his creatures. It is true that while the mind is blinded by sin, and the conscience burdened with guilt, we see not these things clearly; but with this conviction comes the impression that, in a world where there is no sin, beauty is a thousand-fold more beautiful than here, and that the senses may be retained and purified so as to yield joy in measure that is now inconceivable.

Another consideration urged in regard to *state* is one's real absence from society, the real want of it, although surrounded with it, by reason of perfect incompatibility of sentiment, thought, and feeling in those with whom he associates. Sensibly he is very near; but he is conscious that in true congeniality, in everything that constitutes oneness, sympathy, and reciprocal interest, he and they are as wide asunder as the poles. Their physical relations may be very intimate; they may be in the same circle, the same room, and yet, by more than one gauge of measurement, they are far, very far, apart. Hence the expressions among friends of the nearness and closeness of some, the remoteness and distance of others, though the former may, so far as space is concerned, be very much farther away. The difference is in that which creates mutual regard for the same pursuits, tastes, and feelings. Those who love the same things have a bond of union, though oceans roll between them. Those matters which send a thrill of joy through one, vibrate with corresponding effect along the heart-chords of the other. According to this, then, it is not physical nearness, but a spirit-union, that constitutes the truest bliss of mankind, and betokens the same, in greater perfection, as the characteristic of future good in another life.

Moreover, says one, "Were place as momentous as we are ever apt to imagine, Christ had surely said," in his memorable sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the dwellers in the plain, on the mountain, or by the sea; blessed is a southern climate, or a northern; a land of springs, or of vines and olives. But no, not a word of these; not even, Blessed is he who is born or dwells in Judea; but, Blessed is he who, in his inmost soul, is consciously poor and destitute." Doubtless the heart, and the preparation of the heart, is God's peculiar care, and the Saviour knew and taught that man's most important work would lie in that region; that upon its cultivation and regeneration is staked everything. Upon the state of the heart heaven must depend; yet He who sat by the well; He who pointed his followers to the sparrows, the "lilies of the field," the grass, the flowers, the sky, drawing from them his richest illustrations of spiritual life and truth, surely he was not indifferent to place. He saw richness and beauty in the natural world as none other saw it; and if the redeemed spirit should be transferred to a heavenly world, — a garnished portion of God's creation, — it would certainly be no drawback to its happiness, that its pure and refined sense could look out upon a holy place.

Further it is said that, where a holy soul is, there is heaven; that it is only the flimsy veil of mortality that prevents such a one from actually perceiving heaven where he is.

"When we speak of the blest," says Whately, "as being admitted into the presence of God, we must remember that this has not necessarily anything to do with change of place, but implies, rather, a change in their condition."

All persons are, at all times and under all circumstances, in the divine presence — never more at one time than at another; but all are not equally conscious of it. Then all that is meant when it is said a spirit has passed into the enjoyment of God's presence, is the more distinct perception of his presence, and the more perfect communication which this allows.

"The all-present God," says the same author, "does not inhabit one place more than another; but he will be more manifest to his servants in their glorified state than now; and this probably through the means of a change in their powers and faculties."

There will be new perceptions, and this perception will be heaven. As, for instance, one that is blind may stand by a goodly prospect, be surrounded with every form of beauty, and still be moved not at all, because he is utterly unconscious of that which is about him. Let the scales fall from his eyes, and the beautiful images of these things be formed upon the retina of his eye, and his whole being will thrill with emotion which he cannot speak. Says Rev. J. H. Morrison, "Suppose that a man had been created without the sense of hearing or of sight. He stands by the waterfall: the wild magnificence of the surrounding scene, the rainbow softness and repose blended with its energy, the deep and awful harmony of its tones, uttering themselves in the solitude of nature, are there; but to him all is silence and darkness. He goes out as the gray dawn feebly spreads itself over the east, ray after ray shooting up into the darkness of night, till the whole horizon is glowing, and the sun comes forth amid a general burst of song from field and grove. Still to him all is silence and darkness; no voice, no light, and no intimation that such things are. A tradition there may be, like our traditions from prophets, that to some of his race, in distant ages, strange revelations respecting these things were made; but they soon faded out, — the light, he supposes, shone but for a day, and ever after a universal night darkened the earth. But suddenly his ears are opened, and unimagined sensations throng upon him. Melodies that seem from heaven, all harmonious sounds of winds and birds and flowing streams, break in upon the silence of centuries. Then his eyes are opened, and a new creation is before him; earth and sky, with all the changes that pass over them; the approach of morning and

evening, of spring and summer ; and, not less than these, the human face, on which are imprinted, like passing lights and shadows, the various emotions of the soul, — all these, amid which he has lived from childhood, come out as a new order of being. In like manner mortality is to fall off, new senses are to be given, and the holy soul is to rejoice in the full blessedness of a present heaven. He sees, he perceives, what before he did not see and perceive, and, therefore, he is in heaven."

So too of one who revels in dream-land. He lives and acts, enjoys or suffers, as the case may be, as really to himself as if he were awake. "He is in two worlds at once, — consciously in one, unconsciously in the other. How will you transfer his relations from the first to the last? How will you bring him from the dream world into the real one? Not by taking him on a journey through space, but simply by waking him up. Close one set of senses and open another, and the whole work is done. One world vanishes, and another opens upon him its endless range of objects. So it is with us. We dream now ; we shall wake anon, and wonder at the fields which lie about us and the skies that bend over us."

Still, again, it is observed that the spiritual world is "above us, not in space, but in the higher degree of its life, and the higher species of substances that compose it. But it is near us, and we are in it, because our souls are of like substance, and are organisms to receive its spirit and breathe its airs, and have latent in them those orders of perceptive powers capable, in due time, of giving us open relations with it and unobstructed sight of its transcendent glories."

We know that a holy disposition is essential — absolutely indispensable — to the enjoyment, yea, even to the obtaining, of an entrance into heaven. Without it there would be no heaven to the soul, though it were in the midst of holy angels and burning seraphs.

God is holy ; the society and employments of heaven are

holy ; and there must be a corresponding principle in the soul, or there will be no appreciation or enjoyment of celestial things. Earnests of these things — foretastes of them — are often enjoyed below, while the saint is journeying on to the realm of the blest ; and these are construed as evidence that heaven is a state — a state begun below. Jesus, in his wonderful mercy and condescension, reveals himself to his loving disciples, so that often they dwell delightedly in the land of Beulah, having rich experience of divine love and rapturous views of the country beyond. Heaven and earth meet together, and it seems the “grand consummation of all happy experiences.” Payson, Bunyan, and Janeway, with many others, could talk of blessedness and glory before they reached the heavenly fields. They exulted in the blissful prospect — in what they saw and felt of the divine glory. They could talk of heaven begun below. Happy indeed is such a state of mind and heart. It shall continue after death ; the same holy affections, the same loving disposition, only stronger and purer. But it does not necessarily follow that everything is merged into this state. We speak of a happy state of mind now in this world ; and it is, indeed, oftentimes enjoyed, independent of local circumstances ; but there is no inconsistency in speaking of a happy *state* in a happy *place*. It is more consonant with all our ideas ; but we are aware that these fail to grasp the spiritual very fully.

All the imagery of Christian poets has been employed to shadow forth the place of the saints. Pollok’s visions of the New Jerusalem, from beginning to end, were of “lofty battlements” and “immortal heights.” He sees the sinless band repairing to grateful shades, to talk of redeeming love, and anon “sailing serene o’er hill and valley,” bent on the purest mission — the fulfilling of the will of God, their only and rightful King. The fervid spirit of Watts looked to its native skies, and saw “green and flowery mounts,” where weary pilgrims were no longer weary, their hearts and steps forevermore light, because sin interposed no more obstacles in the way. Milton saw “heaven

open wide its ever-during gates, on golden hinges turning," and through them he caught a glimpse of the holy band moving to the sound of sweetest music. Kindred spirits have caught similar inspiration, and in harmonious measure have furnished material wherewith to kindle the devotion of pious souls in all time. It is fit language for the heaven-aspiring nature, and many an hour has been made vocal with these songs that otherwise might have known only silence. Many a night of sorrow has been illumined, many a season of suffering greatly cheered, by these poet-ministrations that tell so much of heavenly joy. They have lent wings to many a spirit, whereby it has soared aloft, until it has felt the influence of a strong current bearing it onward and upward more swiftly. The Christian can say, —

"O, glorious hour! O, blest abode!
I shall be near and like my God,
And flesh and sin no more control
The sacred pleasures of the soul."

Truly the state of those who enter the pearly gates — those who will be of the number of the ransomed, who will receive the "crown of life," and be accounted worthy to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb — truly the state of such will be blessed. Forever, it would seem, the expression might rise to their sainted lips, "O, happy state!"

But that heaven itself be a *state*, is something without the boundary of human knowledge. We do not affirm it, neither deny it. Let us only be zealous in a life-long endeavor to gain admittance into a region so manifestly blessed. Let us only be careful lest we be excluded from the mansions which Jesus has gone to prepare — from the "rest which remaineth for the people of God." When, in the mountain teachings of the Saviour, the multiplied "blessed" was pronounced, it was always upon those spirit-graces which constitute the Christian life, which fit the character for entrance into the place where he was eventually to ascend. The cultivation of these is the work of life. The proper development of these is the end of

probation. The due proportion of these is the fitness God requires ; it is that upon which he is pleased to smile, that upon which he places his seal of approbation. Not that human virtue, not that mortal attainment, as such, secures the divine favor. There is a stream beneath which sinners must be plunged, or they cannot be saved—they cannot see heaven. Souls must be bathed in the fountain which Christ has opened, or the “white robes” of the saints will not be for them. They must wash in the pool which Jesus has stirred, or they can never join the company of the redeemed, upon whom is no “spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

It is for us to heed the injunction, “Wash and be clean.”

“Washed in Jesus’ cleansing blood,
Bathing in that living flood,”

we may come forth meet for the world of purity and light—meet for an inheritance among the saints. We may now think God’s preparations and revelations to be very mysterious. To our finite minds there must of necessity be much of mystery. We shall never find out the ways of the Infinite unto perfection ; and if we did, or could, upon earth, there would be nothing left to study into through eternity.

Could we by “searching find out God,” and fully know his ways and understand his nature, while we are here below, then at death we might as well lie down to sleep, since all would be known, and there remain no other sphere of activity for the soul.

No ! It has been said, and it will always be true, that God’s ways are above our ways, and his thoughts are above our thoughts ; and it has been likewise said, and is, and will ever remain, equally true, that “the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” We have a heaven to win, a work to do, and it becometh us to look well to the matter—the place of our final treasure.

Heaven may, indeed, be nearer than we think, if our souls are in sympathy with Christ. The germ is within, and will unfold in a pure and congenial sphere some day—a day known

only to the Lord, but which will certainly rise in cloudless and everlasting light upon each and all whose heart and treasure have been given into the divine keeping, whose affections have been lovingly, cheerfully transferred to Jesus — him who saves his people from their sin ; him who came to restore the joys of a brighter Paradise to the fallen, yet penitent, children, of men. Eden, in its blooming beauty, was lovely ; in its innocence it was glorious ; but the combined purity and beauty of the heaven Jesus has opened will present a richer scene, a more glorious prospect, than ever appeared in Eden. There is no place like the heaven of Jesus, there is no state like that into which he introduces his followers. Blessed hour, when the soul shall be welcomed there !

CHAPTER XX.

GLIMPSES OF THE BLESSED THINGS TO COME.

Jewish Emotions at beholding Canaan. — Power of first Glimpses. — Living Illustrations. — Pilgrim on the Mount. — Foretastes at the Close of Life. — Hall, Payson, and Janeway. — Triumphant Death of youthful Disciples. — Faith at the open Grave. — Pisgah-views frequent among the Faithful.

“New vistas opening to the wondering gaze,
 New scenes unfolding to the enraptured eyes —
 Hark — the harmonious chords of angel lays
 Sound through the starry realms of Paradise.” — *E. G. Barber.*

WHAT emotions must have stirred the hearts of the Jews of olden time, as they drew near the land which had filled their thoughts and desires, quickened their steps and animated their souls, through all the long and weary way of the desert! Whoso could have walked beside the favored ones as they first obtained a glimpse of the coveted land, would have found a strange light kindling in their eyes, doubtless, and a strange joy welling up from their souls, taking to itself words, and those words expressive of wonder and admiration. For years all their associations had clustered around the land of promise — the fair Canaan. Their hearts had gone out after it, and their steps had tended toward it; and who can tell the joy of greeting?

So it is with Christians — they wander “in a solitary way,” in the desert of this world, the wilderness of sin, finding many a devious path, in which they lose sight of the fiery and the cloudy pillar, which is given for their guidance. When

emerging again into the straight way, they behold the borders of their inheritance, the view of it fills them with inexpressible delight, and they say, "Let us live and die with Canaan in sight." There is nothing that yields such perfect pleasure, nothing that so beguiles the tediousness of the way. It may be rough and uneven, exposing to danger and suffering; but a glimpse of what remains at the end suffices to buoy up the spirit through all, — and the first glimpse — who hath not seen the kindling eye and the smiling countenance, telling of inward joy at this eventful period in life — this never-to-be-forgotten hour, which opens so much to the wondering gaze? What sights burst upon the clarified vision at a time like this — what scenes, what experiences! Then begins the life of faith, and what before was shadow becomes reality. There is no longer any doubt that there is a "happy land;" and it henceforth is the all-engrossing idea to be fitted for it; the all-controlling motive to live so as to reach it.

It is the dawning light of glory in the soul, a new era in the life of sense, for the latter is sanctified and only fulfilled in proportion as the former is all-pervading and true. There is never a right perception of anything until one obtains a glimpse of God, of heaven, of things pertaining to his kingdom. One may feast his eyes upon the loveliest things in nature and art, but the first sight of Jesus and his cross as a practical necessity, a heart-need, makes everything else fade, or at least invests them with a new coloring. He may, indeed, see more beauty in nature; but it is because he traces the workings of God's finger, because he observes in all things the transcript of the Divine, and rejoicing in the new creation, the new light that beams upon him, he adopts the language of him whom Christ restored — "Whereas I was blind, now I see."

One may be the recipient of every earthly good for a long time, apparently without a want unsatisfied; and yet the very first budding of Christian experience in his soul will make him feel, in the deepest consciousness of his nature, that all past joy was as nothing in the comparison.

Hence the confessions of the new-born soul which we so often hear, that a single hour in the delightful freedom of God's service is better than anything it had ever known. Said one upon whose vision heavenly things had burst, "For three days I have known what it is to live, — to live in the true sense — a sense which, before, my highest conceptions had never reached. Every step I take seems to carry me toward heaven. Already I am treading ground that affords a 'thousand sacred sweets.'" Here was a glimpse of that which is spiritual — a foretaste of that which is heavenly. Such views had the Psalmist, when he exclaimed, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand." "O, taste and see that the Lord is good."

When the sun comes out in a clear sky after a long season of cloud and tempest, we are conscious of a very pleasing sensation. Everything seems more beautiful than before. Our appreciation is stronger, our enjoyment greater; but no sunlight, bursting upon the darkest period, is at all comparable with that change which the Sun of righteousness creates, when he comes with "healing in his wings," and broods over the dark and sin-disturbed spirit. No calm ever came so gratefully to storm-tossed mariner in angry ocean tempest as that which the Infinite gives to those tossed upon the restless sea of guilt. There is no sweeter word, in earth or heaven, than this, coming from the all-merciful, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." In these tones love and pity are blended, and they strike the deepest chords in the human soul. They make a new life, they regenerate. Then follow the yearnings for spiritual knowledge and holiness, strivings for spiritual conquests, and ceaseless struggles for final victory. One glimpse will not suffice. It only kindles the ardor to know more, to see more of that which is spread out before him in the new world into which he has been ushered.

Jesus takes him by the hand, and leads him to new scenes and sights; and he loves to linger there, saying within himself, "One glimpse of thine, my dearest Lord, is more to me than

all the treasures of the world. Strange that I so long failed to see those objects which now seem so plain." The veil has been removed, and he has looked into the holy place, and seen things that he never saw before. There is no other glimpse that reveals so much, that has so much power, that inspires so many and such rich hopes. Nowhere else does so much depend upon a look. If we have never felt its influence ourselves, we have all doubtless seen it in others. A young lady at a season of life when all things are fairest and brightest, when hope is alluring and pleasure most enticing, was arrested by a slow disease, and shut out from the world. All that affection could do was done to compensate for the deprivations to which she was subject, and if it was possible for earthly love to make the soul happy, she might have dismissed her regrets, and rested upon its strong bulwark; but she could not do it. The great soul-need was not met. She had never seen Jesus, and in the silent watches of the wakeful night, he came and showed her, what she had never seen before; he gave her a glimpse of herself and of himself, and from that moment there was something new inwrought into her nature. She gave herself to a life-long gaze, and ever and anon one might have observed a sweet serenity of countenance that told the inner joy to which the look had given rise. Human sympathy and love were no less dear, but the divine was infinitely dearer. It was a new development of being — the actual introduction of a new element into the soul — the generation of a new principle, the conjunction of two lives — the life of faith and the life of sense, or rather the blending of the two into one harmonious whole. And what wrought this change? A glimpse of Jesus, — such a glimpse as insured a heart-reception of him.

But this was not all. It opened the New Jerusalem, and she saw the inside glories of the Celestial City, and she read her own title to mansions there, comforted in her loss of earthly things, and more than willing to close her eyes upon

sublunary good, for the richer prospect soon to be realized. Heaven was no longer afar off, but near at hand, divided from earth only by a line, and that line easily crossed, since the new and clear vision showed just how and just where it was best to cross it. This is but one of the many instances that might be cited of those who have been so highly favored thus. Such is more or less the experience of all who are brought out of nature's darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel. Some may look longer, and study more deeply, into the mysterious pictures that hang upon the walls, and thus take in a larger measure of the spirit of the artist, unconsciously incorporating into themselves the elements of his own spirit and character. For this reason it is, that some seem more deeply pervaded with the gospel spirit than others. A slender girl, an enthusiast in the art of painting, went to Rome to study the masterpieces of the several schools exhibited there. She placed herself before them, pondered every line, observed the nice effect of shading, studied every feature and expression, until she became so thoroughly imbued with their spirit and design, as to reproduce the creations of the original artist with an ease and perfectness that were surprising.

So, too, the Christian may place himself before the divinest of all models — the living Jesus, and beholding the unrivalled magnificence of the picture, may, indeed, fail to copy, but find that infused into his soul which will give him control over the best and highest of all arts — the production of a high Christian life. Just in proportion as the model is studied, will its influence appear in the life, and its characteristics be manifested in action.

"Tell me the secret of your uniform quietness and peace," said one, who was met by the reply, "I have Christ in my heart, and heaven in my eye, and why should I not be at rest?" "I have seen Jesus," said another, who was interrogated as to his calmness in the midst of trying circumstances; and it is the

"vision o'er his face," which hath "overpowering charms," which hath in it that which will make the soul glad when all that is earthly and physical combines to sadden and depress.

There are rich experiences for the faithful devotee at the gospel shrine. To such it is given to have precious glimpses of the heavenly world, and to have assurances of their own final transport there.

As one who has never studied into an art can never appreciate the beauties of that art, or the inspiration it occasions, so those who are strangers to the religion of Jesus know not its inherent power and excellency. Nor is one short and transient glimpse sufficient to reveal it all. It may show one form of the sacred kaleidoscope; but the infinite variations are only seen by a perpetual gaze. With every turn of the instrument, something new enters into the combination, exciting fresh admiration and wonder; and this is to continue through all eternity.

If a glimpse of the heavenly world is so transporting here, who can tell what it will be, to look continually upon the unveiled glories of Paradise, with a vision and being that are able to bear and comprehend it? Feeble mortality is sometimes scarcely able to endure the sight. Rev. William Tennent, who was "carried away in the spirit," and had a rapturous view of the celestial state, groaned aloud at the idea of remaining longer in a sinful and tempting world. So entirely was his soul possessed of what he had seen, that he declared himself perfectly indifferent to everything below; so much so, that he would hardly have stooped for the combined treasures of earth, though they had lain at his feet.

What visions of heaven had Richard Baxter! Hear him saying, "Rest! how sweet the sound! It is melody to my ears. It lies as a reviving cordial at my heart, and from thence sends forth lively spirits, which beat through all the pulses of my soul. O blessed day, when I shall rest with God, when I shall rest in the bosom of my Lord, when I

shall rest in knowing, loving, rejoicing, and praising him. O joyful sentence, 'Come, ye blessed.' O blessed grace! O blessed love! How love and joy will rise! But I cannot express it; I cannot conceive it." Thus, by drinking at the heavenly fountain, and feeding upon heavenly manna, the soul rises, and from lofty heights looks out upon the beautiful land. Some have not only glimpses, but rich foretastes, earnest of the joys which await them. They have an actual tasting of the same kind of bliss which they are to know above — the same kind, we say, but not in the same degree; for none are capable of enjoying its full measure this side of Jordan.

When the messengers who were sent "to spy out the land," came back to the children of Israel, burdened with the weight of the rare clusters, they gave to those to whom they presented them, a foretaste of their inheritance, which kindled anew the ardor of their desire for it, and quickened their steps toward it.

So, when Christians are met by the rich clusters of gospel grace, they have a foretaste of future heavenly bliss, and they find themselves running, with new alacrity, the race which must be accomplished before they can gain the triumph — before they can be crowned. Their zeal is renewed, and they find themselves stronger to bear the toil and weariness incident to their life-journey. They see the table spread at the end, with the choicest fruits of Paradise, and Jesus inviting them to the heavenly banquet, to sit down with his honored guests to partake of the bountiful, life-giving repast which he has prepared. Their table in the wilderness of mortality may be scantily furnished; but they heed it not, since they have a seat assigned them at the last great feast — "the marriage supper of the Lamb." No royal preparations of earthly monarchs can compare with this. It far transcends all others in its extent and richness, and thrice blessed those who are invited, or those who have the requisite "garment" to appear a guest at the sacred board.

And this is no illusion. Imagination often spreads a table for us, and we sit, silent guests, around those things which it has prepared; but we find our actual needs the same when we arise as when we sat down. We are no nearer being satisfied at the end than at the beginning; but it is not so with the gospel feast.

But how are these foretastes to be gained? Those who have realized them tell of their blessed sweetness and satisfaction, and also unite in saying that it is only through Christ, the Master of the feast, that they have any adequate sense of the fulness and richness of that which is provided. The apostles talk of "heavenly places in Christ Jesus," that are open upon earth.

There are those who are privileged to sit in them while they are residents of time; yea, all those who truly profess allegiance to the King of heaven may know how grateful and refreshing it is to linger about these places. Here is experienced, in its fullest and most perfect sense, Christian fellowship — the communion of saints. Preparing to go to the same feast, in "the last great day," their hopes, feelings, sympathies, and purposes are one, and they are inspired with one common impulse in the matter of preparation and contemplation. It is a great occasion, and everything depends upon the fitness for it. Therefore they muse and converse together upon their prospects, and that mysterious union which has been prefigured by the vine and its branches. Hereby a bond of intimacy is revealed, and "though the root and stem, and all the most fruitful branches, are on the side of the church triumphant, yet, like the vine which dying Jacob mentions as the mystic symbol of Joseph's increase, 'its branches run over the wall,' and saints on this side also 'eat the bread which cometh down from heaven.'"

Their ear divinely quickened through faith, "authentic tidings" come to their inmost souls from the upper world. They catch the melodies of heaven. Soft spirit-whisperings steal in,

soothing every passion and quelling every tumult, bringing out more fully those graces which are to be finally and fully developed in a better world. Love courses through the heart, imparting its beneficent and comforting influences, until is realized that "peace of God which passeth all understanding." A hallowed purpose becomes visible in the life, and an elevating power in action; but these glimpses and foretastes are far-reaching in their influence. They not only are the connecting link between earth and heaven, while the Christian remains below, but they go to form that chain which binds one to the eternal throne when flesh and heart have failed. They not only materially affect the experience of this life, but they may incite the safely-gathered ones to fresh anthems of praise, as they review the way in which the Lord has led them, in the "heavenly places" above. God has rich communications of grace for the faithful believer, and we love to note them in the earthly manifestation, as they are seen and felt by those who walk with us on the same journey.

We knew an aged pilgrim of more than fourscore years, to whom a rich experience was granted in a favored hour, so that heaven was opened to him, and he read his title clear, as never before. He was in the temple of nature, on a mountain of the Lord's uplifting. It was autumn, and the sere and yellow leaves had each and all found their burial, and sighing winds had pronounced their last requiem — not altogether an unapt emblem of the pilgrim's life, and its spent, or, at least, far-spent joys. A few flowers yet lingered around the spot of his daily labor; and as they greeted his vision, he thought of the greatness and goodness of that Being who formed the world and cares for the flowers, till his soul was pervaded with love. Suddenly a new glory filled his eye, heaven opened before him, all fear of death vanished, and he went home rejoicing in the vision, no more to be "subject to bondage," through fear of the last enemy. He had seen the Lord, and He had given him a foretaste of his inheritance beyond the skies.

But God does not always, nor perhaps often, appear in this signal manner. It is the uniform life of faithfulness and submission that pleases him, and he is pleased to reward each in his own way. We are not to count upon remarkable displays, "but trust him for his grace," in the humble and faithful performance of every duty; but there are seasons of quiet and heart-felt joy which steal upon every one of Christ's disciples, which, if not so peculiar, do, nevertheless, excite gratitude, because of the infinite mercy and condescension which allow them.

Whatever be the character of our Christian experience, it will be rich if we will open our hearts to the fulness of spiritual blessing as promised in the gospel. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." He has indicated his willingness to take up his abode with those who love and fear; and who can tell what manner of good will attend the residence of so heavenly a guest? Who can tell what will flow forth from such union, such friendship? Who does not know that it is supremely grateful to have some one upon whom to rely on all occasions and under all circumstances, with the most perfect confidence; and who so reliable, so ever true, as the loving and all-powerful Jesus? He can give what none other can give. He can show what none other can show. We have said it before, there are no revelations like those which he makes, none other so fruitful in blessing, so momentous in consequence.

With one more instance of heavenly foretaste, we proceed to those more particularly manifest at the close of life, when the Christian is nearer heaven than earth — almost home.

A Christian lady had long desired the experience of a higher life. She longed to have humility and holiness of stronger, richer growth in her heart, and to know and enjoy her Lord more perfectly. Her closet witnessed the fervor of her prayers for the fulfilment of this desire, and, as she afterward said, —

"I hoped that in some favored hour
At once he'd answer my request,
And by his love's constraining power
Subdue my sins and give me rest."

God, however, chose a different method of discipline—an unthought-of, yea, an unsought way for the more full communication of himself; but he worketh in wisdom always. He undermined the citadel of health, took Reason from her throne, darkened the chambers of mind, and left her bereft indeed. At length, however, he lifted the curtain, pouring in the sunlight of his grace, until her full soul cried, "It is enough." Gradually she was restored to physical vigor, while all the while she dwelt upon the mount, her soul at peace, her heart at rest, rejoicing that "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Verily, there is "a God that judgeth in the earth, and is mindful of the children of his covenant."

Precious are these heavenly foretastes which he gives them—these delightful seasons of the divine favor. Let earthly discipline be what it may, the path of life ever so rugged, there are, nevertheless, a lightness of heart, a buoyancy of spirit, with those who walk so closely with God. Clouds may settle down upon the horizon, obscuring their earthly prospects; but there are rifts through which bright skies are discernible, and they can calmly wait till the tempest be overpast and the cloudless day appear.

But if the Christian life be active and progressive, it is toward the close of life that these foretastes become more intensely full and satisfying. As one long exiled from home finds his pace quickened, and his heart palpitating more strongly as he nears again the loved circle; as the distant glimpse of the roof that shelters his own, and the tree that shades it, makes the "Welcome home" to sound in his ears, and the loving embrace and the warm pressure of the hand to be felt, so does the Christian at the end of his earthly career find his heart beating with joy in anticipation of a welcome reception into his heavenly home—his Father's house. From over the narrow stream he hears

a voice, saying, "Come, ye blessed;" and he sees a shining host waiting to introduce him to the blessed band with whom he is to associate forever. His soul leaps forth at the summons, and in passing he leaves behind some measure of that joy he felt at going.

Two loving friends were separated for a time, during which a constant interchange of thought and affection was maintained. As the time of reunion drew near, and the last missive was sent forth, "I am coming," one said; "already I feel the warm pressure of your hand, and the joy of welcome." And so feels the one about to be united "to the spirits of the just made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant," and to all those whose names are written in heaven. "I am going home to die no more" is the jubilant anthem of the soul, — to be no more away from Christ, my soul-lover, — no more away from heaven, that blissful abode, —

"Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns."

Who does not know the exultant language of John Janeway, in the last days of his mortal existence? His feelings were constantly finding expression in such words as these: "O that I could show you what I now see! O the glory! the unspeakable glory that I behold! My heart is full, my heart is full; Christ smiles, and I cannot choose but smile. Can you find it in your heart to stop me, who am now going to the complete enjoyment of Christ? Would you keep me from my crown? The arms of my blessed Saviour are open to receive me; the angels stand ready to carry my soul into his bosom. O, did you but see what I see, you would all cry out with me, 'How long, dear Lord? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!'" So with the Rev. Mr. Halyburton and the holy Payson, who sailed on, as it were, in a *sea of glory*, to the fathomless ocean of bliss in another world. Gordon Hall was interrupted in his work of spreading the news of salvation on a foreign shore — the work to which his life was devoted, and one in which

his heart was deeply enlisted. He would fain have gathered a large number of the sin-soiled around the Cross, that its healing blood might have cleansed them all; but while engaged in leading them there, his Master called him. He lay down in the veranda of a Brahminic temple, and there saw heaven opened, and the angels ready to lead him thither. Forgetting all things else, his thrice-repeated shout was, "*Glory!*" He passed through the gate, and it was shut.

Similar foretastes have been granted to very many of God's children, previous to their entrance into the dark valley. Indeed, so much light has been poured upon it that it has been no longer *dark*. There has been no fear, no reluctance to tread it; yea, they have hastened toward it, because of their eagerness to dwell upon the "enchanted ground" beyond; because of their desire to be at home with the Lord. Christian biography is rich in instances of this kind — of those who have been eminent for their faith and piety, whose triumphal way to the skies has been paved with glory; but their names are familiar to us all, and we choose now those in the humble walks of life, those we have seen and known, whose names and histories are unwritten and unknown to the world. It is a prime characteristic of the religion of Jesus that it is unconfined in its influence. The cottage of the poor and the palace of the rich may be alike blessed by its enlightening beams. The richest glimpses are often afforded to those who dwell beneath the humblest roof, magnifying the grace of God in a most wonderful manner.

In a remote district of New England, and in a remote part of that district, might have been seen a small and very rude dwelling, inhabited by a worthy, yet poor and unlettered family. One of its members, a young girl, became deeply interested in spiritual things, and in the simplicity and energy of her character devoted herself to the cause of Christ. A little time subsequent to this consecration, disease marked her for its victim, and she daily pined away under its influence; but every

rent of the earthly house was a crevice to admit light from above. Rapidly her soul was perfected in the wisdom that maketh not ashamed ; and when her last hour drew near, she was "ready to be offered," joyful that her time of release had come. With a smiling countenance, in her last moment, she exclaimed, "The angels are here : farewell ; I am going." And she went — went to the bosom of her Saviour, to him who had ransomed her spirit, and given the victory. None could have looked upon that scene and felt that salvation hinged upon any earthly consideration. Position, wealth, and fame are nothing ; but wherever is found a humble, penitent, trustful heart, there is a temple for the Most High ; there is a place for him to reveal his glory. Angels are commissioned to watch over such, and to bear them safely to the mansions of the blest when their mission below is accomplished. Memory recalls another of kindred circumstances and spirit. All the hopes that beam so brightly and allure so strongly for the youth in opening life were hers. She had just reached that period when one naturally basks in the sunshine of existence ; when the heart sends forth its tendrils, which attach themselves to the many fair and beautiful objects around it, clinging with such tenacity that it is like breaking the life-strings to sever them. She had given her heart, with its wealth of affection, to one she loved, and the feeling was warmly reciprocated. Imagination had already invested a future home with its peculiar charms, and she walked in the light of love continually.

But a change came over the spirit of her dream. The light faded from her eye, the rose from her cheek. Her step grew feeble, and it became evident that consumption was doing its fatal work. Now came the relinquishing of every earthly prospect, the yielding of every cherished wish and hope to the inevitable decree. For a time, indeed, there was a struggle, a conflict, the fierceness of which God only knew ; but the victory was soon gained. A holy calm settled upon her soul, and was visible in her eye ; and one looking there would have seen

no trace in those serene and placid depths of the recent struggles of heart and self-love.

For a time she felt that much was involved in the sacrifice; but there was no reserve in the final and cheerful surrender. The committal was perfect, and life ebbed away with the sweetest resignation and composure. She saw the flowers open and send forth their sweetness upon the fragrant breath of spring, and smilingly she said, "It is the last time. Before they open again I shall have done with earth." The roses sent in their perfume at her window, and the breezes of early summer kissed her cheek, but they enticed not her spirit to earth again. The eye of faith was fixed upon the beauty and blessedness of another land, and daily and hourly it grew in desirableness and interest. Earthly friends and friendship were indeed dear, but she knew that the sweetest lays of heaven were inspired by love, and it would more perfectly and satisfactorily fill her soul there than here. On a bright summer day Jesus sent and called her. She saw his extended hand, and with unutterable joy upon her countenance, and a song of triumph upon her lips, she clasped it and went, while surrounding weeping friends were constrained to sing, —

"How blest the righteous when he dies!"

According to her own request, it was placed upon her tombstone, "Saved by grace." Her career was short, and ended in triumph; but there was no merit there, only such as belonged to Jesus and his infinite sacrifice. Salvation is all of grace — free, unmerited grace. How it is magnified in such instances as these! Those who go up from their humble homes to wear the crown of the redeemed must, indeed, forever ascribe glory and honor to Him who wrought the wondrous scheme, and made the royal road to heaven. Not less, however, must those who are called from among the "mighty" and the "noble" of the land pay the same tribute. They too must say, "It is all of grace," if at last they are conquerors, and take the crown, the palm of victory.

“Grace first contrived the way
To save rebellious man;
And all the steps that grace display,
Which drew the wondrous plan.

“Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.”

“O, help me to sing of grace,” said one with his expiring breath; and the same appeal was echoed by another who would have the last sound that should greet him upon earth that of a grateful song for redeeming grace.

We give one instance more, and only one. We know that these dying experiences are not the most important portion of living. A faithful life is that to which the Christian has his attention more often directed in that book given for his counsel and guidance. The Bible is mostly silent upon death-bed scenes. Stephen “saw heaven opened,” and had rapturous visions of the glory which encircled the place where Jesus sat; and his own interest in what he saw extracted all fear of death and persecution, and made him indifferent as to the manner of his translation thither. Paul was joyful in the anticipation of death, and doubtless, when he did die, was happy and satisfied with the presence of his Lord. We know that God does visit his friends, that he does grant them rich and heavenly manifestations of himself—precious glimpses of what they are to enjoy; and we would notice this that we may extol that grace which does so much.

In the town of L——, Mass., lived a young lady, the only and gifted child of doting parents. Intelligent and refined, she was the pride and admiration of a large circle. Nature had conferred upon her rare powers of mind and rare grace of person. Her clear and lustrous eye beamed with unwonted brightness, and the stamp of intellect was upon her forehead. Sweetness and gentleness were mingled in her disposition, altogether making a character of no ordinary mould.

She loved the walks of science, the fields of knowledge, and was a successful explorer there. Friends beheld the rapid unfolding of her mind with peculiar interest, for at a very early age her attainments were particularly varied and extensive. She gathered about her all pleasant things, — birds, flowers, minerals, — moving among them, herself a beautiful specimen of God's creation.

Her glad spirit always seemed in unison with the happiest part of God's world. The chill winds of adversity had never blown upon her; the breath of sorrow had never touched her. Health bloomed upon her cheek, and gladness was the abiding guest of her heart. What must the approach of the last enemy be to such a one? She was stayed in her course by a fever, that slowly crept through her frame, and finally reached to the vitals, awaking that "hollow cough" which is the sure harbinger of a dread foe. So unwilling were the loving to harbor a thought of separation, they tried long to assure themselves that it was only an illusion that would soon be past; but the smitten one discerned the dart that was aimed, and bared her bosom to the stroke. When at last the loving mother took home the bitter consciousness to her soul, she sought to retain the precious features of her child by the art which perpetuates the image, yet after all cruelly mocks the yearnings of our love for the sympathetic smiles and loving glances once given by the living friend. "The remembrance of your child will always be fresh," said the dying one; "you will never forget your only one — it is enough." "May I not then retain those ringlets upon which I have loved to look, and which seem so much like yourself?" "They belong to the grave," was the reply; "let it have its due."

"I have loved life," said she; "it has been bright, sunny, happy; but another life opens before me, and all that life is love. Mourn not, weep not, for I am going home." Beautifully her life brightened into its golden sunset. Early one Sabbath morning it was said of her, "She has gone home."

Seldom is recorded a fairer history — a more beautiful life or more peaceful death. Sympathizing ones wept with the mourners, and said, "It is a mystery;" and we cannot repress the rising why? when so much virtue and loveliness are laid in an early tomb; but Jesus is on the throne, and we are short-sighted and selfish; therefore let us bow to his righteous mandates, though they encircle us closely and affect us keenly. Let us rejoice that he prepares our friends for an early translation, and so freely vouchsafes his presence, when the scenes of earth and time recede from their view. How this detracts from the anguish of bereavement! It lightens the stroke that would otherwise be crushing. There is nothing that grants more effectual consolation than the assurance that those who go from us are gone to be forever at rest with the Lord.

When we stand by the open grave where we bury so much of joy, we are, nevertheless, not strangers to joyful emotions if we saw the loved depart in the triumphs of faith, for then we feel that though we have lost, they have gained — gained an unspeakable reward, and therefore are infinitely more blessed than they could be on earth.

It is these heavenly foretastes that make the young and the hopeful so willing to yield themselves to the embrace of death. We marvel not so much when the aged pilgrim manifests a desire to leave the world, for he has proved all it had to offer — tried it in all its aspects. Having tasted its joys, and known its disappointments, it would not be very strange if he should become weary of the dull, unsatisfying round, and desire something new and better. But for those whose taste the pleasures of earth have never palled, to turn aside and greet the king of terrors seems more unnatural. More unnatural, we say — it seems to some; but to those who understand what heavenly foretastes mean, there is nothing strange or wonderful in this, unless the emotions be excited in connection with that rich grace which produces such willing resignation — such glad experience. Forever let man adore this superabounding grace.

"The soul that can rise above the clouds of earth," says one, "can always behold the infinity of heaven; and perhaps every rightly-taught man, before God takes him, ascends to a Pisgah of his own, from whence to look farewell to the wilderness he has passed in the leadings of Jehovah's right hand, and to catch a glimpse of the promised land lying in the everlasting orient before him." From afar comes a voice to his spirit's ear. He knows the voice, and with an unction of joyful obedience he bounds toward the place from whence it calls, "glad — more than glad, to obey."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HEAVENLY INHERITANCE A PECULIAR GOOD.

Emotions at earthly Acquisitions. — Superiority of heavenly. — The first Paradise. — The second eclipsing it. — Perpetual Youth. — Sinlessness the crowning Glory. — The Faith-inspired Soul rich. — Watchfulness necessary.

“O happy, happy country, where
There entereth not a sin,
And Death, who keeps its portals fair,
May never once come in.” — *C. Bowles.*

IF in some hour, as we were musing upon our poor estate, our obscure and homely destiny, it should be told us, and on such good authority that we could not doubt it, that a kind and thoughtful friend, in the generosity of his nature, and in sympathy for our condition, had awarded us a portion of his richer domain, what a change would come over our spirits! Doubt might, indeed, at first, largely mingle with the new-born hopes; but as the papers were unrolled, and the signature displayed, the right of possession would be confirmed, and with the confirmation would come that which would form, as it were, a new creation. Everything would appear in a new aspect. A new and brighter charm would be given to life and the world. Where before was despondency, would now be courage. Ambition would take the place of depression, hope would kindle in the eye, joy light the countenance, and the heart enter largely into plans and schemes with reference to the new possession. Every thought and action would be associated with it, and every step taken with reference to

it; and if any one had been in a situation to know minutely of it, if he with his own eyes had seen it, how eagerly should we seek him out, and with what interest inquire of its resources, its location, and its advantages. We should not only be anxious for general characteristics, but we should not weary of the discussion of the smallest matter that concerned it, inasmuch as we should feel ourselves interested in and affected by the smallest consideration respecting it, especially if we contemplated removal thither. We should observe every precaution in regard to title and transportation, and as the time of arrival drew on, expectation would gain new strength, and every delay be proportionately unwelcome.

Shall it be less than this with regard to our heavenly inheritance? All terrestrial possessions, and all that results from them, only endure for a little time, and then vanish away. We may clasp our title to these ever so firmly, but it and them will be wrenched from our embrace in the hour when soul and body part.

In many a silent and meditative hour, musing upon poverty of spirit, and need of soul-riches, we have been met by the assurance — a thousand times made sure — that a kind Friend has cared for us; that the infinite compassion of his nature has been touched, as he has looked down upon our condition; and that, with the most unselfish love ever known, he has portioned out his boundless possessions, and offered them freely to our acceptance, "without money and without price." We are told that he has prepared "mansions," and he stands waiting to give us a blessed and welcome reception into them. Moreover they are so richly furnished that human conception fails in the attempt to get a just idea of them. He knows that we are poor, and in great need, and his preparations have been made accordingly. He knows that we are wandering and abject pilgrims, without raiment and without means to purchase any; and in pity for our forlorn state, he has provided material for an ample supply of the most per-

fect robes that mortals ever beheld, and says, "Come and take them!"

He knows that man wants a home, — that it is the native desire of his soul to have a spot where he may rest, enjoy life, and find sympathy; and he fitted up one transcendent in all these excellences, and offered it on the wisest and simplest conditions possible. Beside this, it is to be ever-enduring, so that those once entered have never a fear that their lease will run out, and they be obliged to leave it. It is a provision in which there is no partiality. To each and all he says, "Come, and ye shall be my children, — my sons and my daughters, — and share in all the blessings of my heavenly home." He says it to us. From our Father's house in the skies the invitation comes sounding in our ears, "Come, and ye shall be welcome: for your poverty, take riches; for your abjectness, take lofty virtue; for your dark fears, take brightest hopes; and for the meagre and contracted possessions of time, take the full and varied ones of heaven." How can we be indifferent to such full and free invitations as these? Why manifest so little interest in what pertains to the New Jerusalem, and the possessions there?

It would seem that nothing would surpass our eagerness to know and understand all things that have the most remote connection with it; and if we found those who were more deeply versed in them than ourselves, we should be lost in the absorbing idea of gaining more knowledge, and in the application of that knowledge to our own practical benefit.

It would seem that all the allurements of earth and sense would be as nothing in comparison with the conditions it is necessary to observe in order to secure an entrance to so blessed a home; for what is it to have a heavenly home — an inheritance there? rather what is not included in it? It comprises everything that can be thought of or desired, so that, when we come to consider it, we are lost in the stupendous glory; and when we single out its pleasures, and sum

up the whole, we can only say that it is a boundless, shoreless prospect that we have failed in measuring. To have a title to this inheritance is to have a deed of heaven, a mansion in the Celestial City, and all that pertains to, and groweth from, a happy, endless life; but to know fully what it is, one must stand on the safe side of Jordan, and, in the shadow of the great white throne, look down the long, long vista of ages, and feel the spirit-swellings consequent upon the thought that the richness of the inheritance is only then begun to be revealed.

Something we are permitted to know of it here. We cannot commission messengers to spy out the land and bring us back a report; but it has pleased the great Monarch of the realm to give us so much description that we cannot be misled in the more important peculiarities. We are not to know its location now, but we do know it is a pleasant inheritance, for all the ideas of pleasantness the imagination can boast we are warranted in associating with it; and even when these, in their utmost fertility, are exhausted, we are told that it is but a small part of the actual.

Who of us can imagine what Eden was in its original beauty and loveliness, before the trail of the serpent was discoverable there? There is nothing upon earth now that bears even the faintest resemblance to it: if the place is in existence, not a trace of its former glory remains to tell the traveller where innocence dwelt. He who penned the story of the creation has told us it was a "garden," and that "every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food" was there; and we know there was nothing to mar beauty in those early days, when man and woman basked in the smiles of their Maker, and the sunshine of love bathed everything in light and joy. Everything was fresh from God's hand, and bore the impress of divine beauty; and we therefore suppose that all things were radiant with loveliness — such loveliness as we have never seen or known: and yet Eden in its highest style, could never compare with God's

second Paradise, which he has prepared for his redeemed ; for the tempter will never enter there, and what is beautiful will forever remain so, with no blight or curse.

The first Paradise showed forth God's love, power, and glory ; but the second illustrates it more perfectly than the first ever could. While the first pair were sinless, they roamed amid bowers and groves that charmed every sense ; but those who enter upon their eternal inheritance in the heavens, who walk in the garden of sweets divine love and beneficence have provided, will always be sinless, and always dwell among delightful things. They will have no fear that the celestial scenery will change, or that they will be ever sent forth to less congenial pursuits and prospects.

Yes, Christians have a precious inheritance ! Mourning, disconsolate one, walking in a thorny way, where the heart is often pierced, bow not thy head in despondency ; look upward and onward a little way, and behold how fair a prospect opens before thee. There will be nothing there, in all the long way, to pierce the soul through, for it is a thornless region. Here we often pause to weep over some fresh heart-laceration, but there will be no more occasion in the Canaan above.

Then there is this very striking peculiarity : those who enter upon the heavenly inheritance, and breathe the airs of Paradise, find their cheeks mantling with eternal bloom. They have perpetual youth. There is no growing old in the vale of immortality, no decay of the faculties, no diminution of power, no wearing out of the mental constitution, bringing those sad and unwelcome changes which we so often see here, in our friends who are nearing the prescribed boundary of existence. It stirs our grief and makes our tears flow to see those we love becoming so unlike themselves through the influence of disease or age, and we wish they would not grow old so soon. We wish we could stay the wrinkles and the furrows in the hitherto smooth and placid brow ; that we could prevent dimness of vision, and all those things which are the premonitions of a

failing body ; but there is no relief. We must see the "wheel at the cistern" becoming constantly more unfit for use, with the consciousness that ere long we shall find it altogether ceasing in its revolutions. We must see the "silver cord" becoming less and less capable of extension, and we are continually beset by fears lest almost unawares we find the "golden bowl" broken, and see the "pitcher at the fountain" an empty and useless thing. Age and decay meet and shake hands, each finding in the other the expected sympathy, but the mutual recognition is limited to earth and time, for as soon as one steps over the borders of the heavenly inheritance, he is stamped with the seal of everlasting youth. The cycles of eternity will run their destined rounds, and bring no change to the vigor and freshness which the immortal spirit will feel in its allotted course. There is something in the "ethers of immortality" that keeps the spirit ever fresh and ever young, so that there will never come a point in its history when the most prolonged action will be a weariness. Where in all human history, in all fabled life, is there anything that bears the remotest comparison to this? To be always active and never to grow weary, to be always living and never to grow old, is the privilege of the inhabitants of heaven ; and all those who, through grace, are permitted to walk its streets, will find themselves in possession of this same boon. The most illustrious and useful of earth are often laid aside and compelled to close their eyes upon half-finished schemes, because their powers were too short-lived for the purpose ; but the broadest plans of eternity will never remain unexecuted for this reason. The ambition and interest which prompted the elaborate plan will be equally fervid in the completion, equally ready for new and different action, if so be the divine glory be concerned, and the divine approbation secured, as it always will be there. O blessed land of perpetual youth, that allows such free and continued expansion ! It is like the inspiring, invigorating breezes of spring after a long and cheerless winter. O, it is more ! but the "more" must

have a sealed significance, since "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," all the sights and sounds of that land, —

"Where saints immortal reign."

It must be a wonderfully salubrious climate. There are "no chilling winds, no poisonous breath," and those who have dwelt very near the walls on this side have talked of "ambrosial gales," and "perfumed breezes;" but we know that imagination has much to do with this, and at the same time we know also that the air must be very pure to insure perpetual youth, and perfect freedom from all sickness and disease.

We have heard some discoursing of "bowers that are ever green and fair," of "flowers of amaranthine tints," of birds that warble most melodious notes, and have exquisite plumage. It may be that flowers dot the margin of the "crystal stream," and birds may sing in the boughs of the trees on either side; but these are matters that the inspired historians have not deemed of sufficient importance to speak of. We are thankful they have written of the "pure river," and the "tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations," for these form the basis of cheering hopes. If they are simply figurative, they nevertheless remind us of something that is very precious and desirable. It makes us sure that fruit of celestial growth is exceeding rich, whatever it be, and that the "river of the water of life" is a current of eternal love and bliss. Let "foreshadows" and "foresplendors" be what they may, they cannot exceed the "riches of the glory of the inheritance" that is promised to the believer. "It were enough," said one, "to have glory; but to have a 'weight of glory,' and this 'eternal,' it is amazing." A view of it hath, as it were, flooded the soul of the Christian, so that he has been overpowered almost, his feeble senses being scarcely able to bear the rich effulgence.

"Glorious things" are indeed spoken of the New Jerusalem, "the city of our God." What will it be to stand upon the lofty battlements of that city "which hath foundations"? Looking out upon the broad inheritance, the redeemed soul can say, It is

all mine. O, what felicity to roam the fertile plains with such companions and guides as will be found there! What joy to trace out the wonders of the universe, the workings of those mysterious laws that have hitherto baffled all attempt at understanding! What satisfaction to be a successful explorer, and see light bursting upon those things that have always been as intricate problems to my feeble but searching mind! All these things are but a small part of the attainments which those will make who are accepted pupils of the Most High. They are comprehended in its riches, and its glory, and it is no trifling consideration with the Christian scholar to know that every obstacle in the way of improvement will be removed; that every possible advantage will be given for the constant acquisition of something new and valuable; that the senses will be so perfect and appreciative that there will be no tedious and wasting labor in this part of heavenly employment. Surely this is peculiar to heaven. There is nothing like it below, so that we feel assured that earth is not the better land. We may have our study here, our chosen themes of meditation, our favorite sciences, and be devoted to them; but we find no more persistent guests than weariness and exhaustion, and are compelled to yield to their influence, though the train of thought be but half projected, and the first principles of science be hardly grasped; but in heaven it will no more be said that "much study is a weariness to the flesh." In that land of everlasting youth and vigor, the dark-eyed visitors will never dare to venture; and O, what swift progression without their frequent interruptions, rather with no interruption at all!

But talk as we will of the varied and peculiar joy which awaits the titled saint, we never reach the highest ideal of fruition until we speak of it as a sinless inheritance. This is the crowning glory—the climax of all. Ask the sin-sick, burdened soul, grieving over the long catalogue of sins which has risen up before him, what is his highest aspiration, and will he

not say, "To be free from the dominion and power of sin?" Ask the zealous Christian who is endeavoring to conform his life and will to the standard of the gospel, what he desires most, and the earnestness of his tones will tell the burden of his heart, as he replies, "To be delivered from the bondage of sin." Sin is the curse of our world. It brought "death and all our woe," and to it may be traced every evil under the sun. It is that with which the Christian has to contend in all his journey to the world of light. Oftentimes he finds himself almost overpowered by its influence, and well nigh faints by the way. Then the thought comes into his soul, inspiring new courage, "There is a world without sin, and I will renew my zeal, redouble my energy, in the attempt to win it." It is an "exceedingly evil and bitter thing," but there is such a thing, through grace, as winning the name of conqueror. But the effects of sin are not only visible in individual life and character; the disturbed and disturbing forces of the physical world bear testimony to the fearful prevalence of the evil, and who can tell how far the influence extends? "When man, as the lord of creation, for whom sun, and moon, and stars were made to know their orbits, sinned, they shrunk from their courses, turned in dark frowns toward him, and the reign of night and death began. Even if none of the heavenly orbs that stand related directly to the earth had changed their relations to it, if the earth itself has changed in its writhings under the curse, it was sufficient to introduce the reign of gloom and death. There are evidences in abundance of such change of relation. The earth itself is held in its orbit by antagonisms!—by a force driving it away from its centre, and another force restraining it, like a sinner poised in the point where God's justice and mercy meet! Now, what are some of the effects of this abnormal relation of things? We answer, the introduction of various disturbing forces, unceasing collision and friction, wearing and tearing, blighting and blasting, and a ceaseless war of opposing interests and laws ever crossing each other. As results, we

have extremes of heat and cold, of darkness and light, and the laws of gravitation ever hurling back into primeval dust all forms of life that struggle after permanence and perfection.

"Hence we have barrenness and gloomy solitudes — in the polar regions snow, ice, and pitiless frost; in equatorial climes, plains of burning sand, without blade, flower, or smiling fountain; and in places intermediate, a mixture of these. We have sweeping storms, which fly over us like angels of death. We have floods, which seem to have no law but their own rage. We have internal fires, that hiss like serpents in their dens, and shake fearful tongues of flame from out the tops of mountains. We have earthquakes to cause old earth to groan to its centre, and to shake at its poles, while its crust opens as a demon's jaws from the pit, engulfing landscapes and cities!" All this is occasioned by sin; and in view of it, can any say it is not such a "bitter thing" as God represents it? Had it never come into the world, we should have feasted ourselves with beauty and harmony, where we now are condemned to the painful beholding of deformity and discord. Was it nothing to have this change wrought? In our inmost souls do we not feel there is a very great difference between pleasing and painful emotions? Had not the world known the evil, there would have been no cause for discord and unpleasant sensation in all the wide earth. From one extremity of the globe to the other, the elements of nature would be found in perfect repose, or working out most fitly the counsels of the Creator. They shall indeed accomplish his high behest now; but sin is abroad, and the penalty is affixed, and therefore will the earth quake and the mountains pour forth fire. This physical disturbance, however, in the universe, fearful and extensive as it is, is not like that which has been introduced into the moral nature of man. There it has done a fearfully tremendous work. There are volcanoes, earthquakes, and floods in the moral world, whose fiery streams deluge and lay waste what would otherwise be fertile places in the soul, bringing forth the fruit that God loves to see. All

the tumults of the soul, all the heart's unrest, all the apprehensions of mind, all the tortures of conscience, and all the rebellings of will, are attributable to but one source, and that is sin. It makes life one general scene of confusion and distress, and sends us forth, poor creatures, on a storm-tossed ocean, exposed to a thousand dangers, sometimes, indeed, spanning our way with a so-called "bow of promise," but doing it only that it may deceive more effectually and ruin more entirely. From the time the fatal act was consummated in the groves of Paradise, man went forth in a devious way to be led blindfold by sin, and since that moment it has invariably sought the complete control of each succeeding generation of mankind.

"Sin has a thousand treacherous arts;" but let a jubilant anthem go pealing through the galleries of time, losing itself among the bright arches of heaven, because a "living way" is prepared in which sin is vanquished — unequal to the contest. The doings of sin are very sad in our hearts, in the world. We feel it, and we deplore its power, and turn more gratefully to the promised inheritance because there is no more conflict with the enemy on that peaceful shore. Jesus, the "Captain of salvation," is victorious over all; and through the influence of his grace we may triumph over the foe, and ultimately wear a crown in the Paradise above.

"Halleluiah to the Lamb, who has bought us a pardon;
We'll praise him again when we pass over Jordan."

We wonder not that the spirit of the beloved disciple was stirred with unutterable joy when he was "caught up" so near the heavenly world that he heard the song of the ransomed ones; nor that the chorus of the song was a loud strain in honor of Him "who had redeemed, by his blood," and brought a multitude to so goodly a heritage. Surely it is the chief element of heavenly happiness, the highest of all joy, that there is cleansing from all sin. If the heart swells with grateful love to the Redeemer, it has only to pour out its loving tribute into his willing ear, without the distractions and variations that are so

often attendant upon our highest and best thoughts and feelings here. But we cannot particularize. Everything that can be desired is found in a sinless world. Lost harmony and order will be restored. The "Paradise regained" will be more than we can imagine; and who would not have such an inheritance as this? You whose daily song is that of the poor, —

"No foot of land do I possess,
Or cottage in the wilderness," —

you may be rich — you may enter in and take possession of the rich fields of Canaan — you may have a mansion in the City of God, where the streets are paved with gold, and the inhabitants live in the most delightful concord. Ye who are sad, and weary of the heavy woes of mortality, look up — there are no burdens to be borne among the saints in light. They left them all this side of the wall, and went in singing and light-hearted to their new possessions, and so may you.

Those who are troubled at the seeming triumph of sin, of injustice and oppression, may take comfort in the thought of the "prepared world," from whence all these things are excluded. O, blessed is the inheritance of the saints — great the joy in reserve for the righteous. There must be beauty and joy, there must be peace and love, where there is no sin. There must be perfection — full, complete perfection. Then it is a perfect inheritance. Christian, it is thine — it is thine. Go joyfully forward to the goodly prospect. Go trustingly, yet carefully onward, for a world of sin lieth between thee and it. In all the way keep an eye fixed upon the far-off dome of the Celestial City. Life is a pilgrimage, death is the gateway, and full fruition awaiteth you beyond. Until the hour of possession come, —

"Be faithful and true,
Keep Canaan in view."

CHAPTER XXII.

NEGATIVE BLISS OF THE NEW JERUSALEM.

Relations of Negation and Affirmation. — Bible Representations mainly negative. — Characteristics. — No Curse. — No Death. — No Danger. — No Sorrow or Mourning. — Blessedness of those who enter. — Perfect Vision. — The whole Being complete.

“No sickness there,
No weary wasting of the frame away,
No fearful shrinking from the midnight air,
No dread of summer’s bright and fervid ray!

“No hidden grief,
No wild and cheerless vision of despair;
No vain petition for a swift relief,
No tearful eye, no broken heart, are there.” — *Anon.*

To know what a thing is *not* is to know what *it is*. The negation of one thing is the affirmation of another. Thus, if we say that a certain man is not prosperous, we are understood to mean that circumstances prove adverse to him, — that he finds the reverse of prosperity. If we say that one is not happy, we mean that he is unhappy; and if one is not poor, that he has an independence. If we have negative considerations of condition and character, the actual state may be predicated.

Then, when we are told what heaven is *not*, we conclude what it *is*. The absence of one thing is the presence of another by actual law. If darkness prevail not, then it is light. In the moral world, if right does not exist, then wrong does; if there is not sorrow, then there is joy; if there is not love, then there is hate, or at least indifference.

In the spiritual world, if one does not discern its peculiar beauty, if he does not see the worth and appropriateness of objects, and thus loses their power for the elevation and development of his higher nature, we say of him that he is blind. He *is* morally blind, and there must be a change wrought before he can see. We form our opinions in great measure by negatives — our opinions of places, men, and things. If it be said of one portion of the world that the climate is not cold, then we associate with it heat; if the soil is not fertile, then we suppose it sterile. If it be said that the inhabitants are not intelligent, and that the government is not stable, and not wanting in tyranny, it is equivalent to saying that it is a very miserable country, without the requisite elements of good order and society.

The opposite may be likewise argued, if we may pronounce negatively upon all the evil principles which are the bane of prosperity, for the absence of all evil is the presence of all good. This is what made Eden so lovely before the fall. There was no evil there, and this was all comprehensive in affirmations as to what was there. So when the inspired writers tell us what is not in the New Jerusalem, we know very well what is there, for the theory of opposites is not wholly Socratic.

The Bible representations of heaven are in great measure of a negative character; and in considering them the Christian will, at least, find his heart swelling with holy joy, that so much is not there which has been and still is the destroyer of his peace on earth. He will exult in the exclusion of every enemy of his soul, in the final extinction of every unhallowed passion, and that sin in every form has no more dominion over him. When he finds that it is said of his future home, that there is no sin there, his soul, so sick of sin, is ready to cry out, "It is enough. The absence of sin is the presence of everything my soul desires." Life and joy can never be wanting in a world where all is pure and holy.

Tell me of a place where there are no unhappiness, and no cause for any, and do I not know that I should be supremely happy there, though the particular elements of that joy be unknown to me?

Tell me of a world where are no deformity and no blight, where transparent light falls upon objects that have no sign of withering or decay, and do I not know that it must be a most attractive spot, the very consummation of beauty, although I cannot define a single characteristic of that all-embracing loveliness?

Do we not feel that it is a very desirable place, when we are assured, "there shall be no more curse"? In this sin-disordered world there must be law, and where law is there is penalty, and where this is there is fear; but all these things are done away in the land where there is no sin, and consequently "no curse," at least so far done away as to leave no room for fearful penalty. Doubtless there will be laws in heaven; but there will be no resistance to law, but saints themselves be its living fulfilment. Do we not feel that it would indeed be a blessed thing to have the curse removed — we who feel so deeply its abiding and far-reaching power?

It is "a rising up against, and an interfering with, the harmonious course of the originally established order." We know that our earth wears a different aspect since the introduction of the *curse*, and that man, physically, intellectually, and morally, is not what he would have been if he had never incurred the displeasure of the Almighty by his aggravated sin. It was no limited portion of earth, or mankind, that was visited; but everywhere, and upon everything, the darkening, degenerating influence is felt. What a transformation appeared in the vegetable kingdom! According to the original order, it was to yield its offerings to the gratification and welfare of man in rich spontaneousness. True, there were to be pruning and tillage, but they involved only the activity necessary for pleasing variety — nothing like the sweat-inducing labor that was

afterward requisite to remove the "thorns and thistles" which threatened to choke what the human race really needed for their sustenance. With the curse there came the necessity for toil. It was forevermore to be associated with man's earthly history. The earth was no longer ready to yield her glad tribute, unasked and unsought, pouring it out at the feet of man, a continued and generous libation ; but he was to labor, to wring it out, to have his bread moistened with sorrow, until he should find himself sinking, by very weariness and disappointment, into the earth from whence he was taken. There was no alternative. If man would live, he must conquer the means of living from soil that had suddenly become very grudging, even though it were at a painful cost of those resources he prized the most. Once the animal frame was a stranger to everything but vigor, freshness, and gladness ; but after the curse, it knew weariness, languor, and depression, instead.

There was to be unceasing demand for labor, and less capacity to endure, for a long train of physical evils came with the others. The vast disturbance of forces in the universe doubtless affected the physical destiny of man ; but in his own frame, so curiously wrought, so perfectly made, there was a sad, a serious disturbance when the curse came. Before, there were never such friction, such chafings and jarrings, in the intricate and delicate machinery as now. Then, too, the stream of life was but in one direction. Afterward there were currents and counter-currents, which would always make progress a doubtful and difficult matter. Oftentimes the body will not work with the mind, or the mind with the body. The mental forces cannot always be accounted on for steady and effectual action. In this, too, we deplore the effect of the curse. But who can measure the extent of these things? The derangement and disorder it has occasioned are past calculation. Here and there in the earth, at the sound of human footsteps, venomous serpents lift their heads and hiss, as if to taunt man with the

story of his fall. Angry and destructive beasts prowl around his pathway in the wilderness. There are wide deserts, where the eye rests upon no green or living thing; but, as far as the moral exceeds the natural, so much more dreadful is the heart-waste that has been induced. Love, affection, benevolence, and all the graces and virtues were more vigorous and lofty in Eden than they were outside, and the moral foes, too, are more to be dreaded than the fiercest beasts of prey in the world. We had rather see Sahara in its sandy gloom, though it should take a much larger portion of creation than it does, than to see a single heart desolated by the fires of passion, and blasted by the fearful simooms of malice and envy. A heart-waste is a melancholy sight; but O, how many have been seen under the curse!

The poisonous serpent and the hungry tiger have each a deadly power at command, but at most they can only tear the covering from the kernel, which they are powerless to harm; but they who find themselves captives, under the dominion of that most merciless of all foes, sin, are in danger of suffering eternal disadvantage by reason of the embrace.

There are no foes like those which hunt for prey in the moral field. There are no desolations in all the earth more dreadful than these when they gain their end. Their path is the trail of the Destroyer. It is the blackness of ruin and the desolation of death. All this cometh to our sin-cursed land. O, the depth of the misery that is thus occasioned! But all this is to be escaped in heaven; "there will be no more curse" there. Pilgrim to the holy shrine, dost thou realize whither and to what thy footsteps tend?

As there are hopes born into the soul, which kindle most delightful sensations, and are yet wordless because of the sweetness and extent of their power, so is the Christian impressed as he reads this description of his heavenly home, "There shall be no more curse." With this single idea, a thousand others come crowding to tell him what is, where the

curse is not, and for a time he almost fancies that he breathes the air of that radiant shore,

“Where the people are blessed, and sin no more.”

Serenity, of heavenly origin, broods over his spirit, and he feels like hastening on to that blessed place, where there is happy exemption from all sin, and the curse is no more known. Thank God that he has told us this; that he has given this knowledge, and permitted such anticipation, while struggling with our numerous foes in the conflict of life. When the battle waxes strong, and the fainting heart and failing energy tell of weakness, we may find ourselves inspired with fresh zeal and courage, as we hear a voice above us saying, “There shall be no more curse.”

When Sorrow spreads her raven wing about us, and Affliction folds us in her heavy mantle, the same cheering words may help us to throw off the leaden weight, and rise toward the land that is free from sin and all woe. The thought of such a place is as a cordial to the soul continually; but the hope of finally reaching it is an untold solace in all the ever-recurring seasons of emergency and conflict here.

Circumstances may conspire to make earth seem dark and dreary; but the “gloom-inspiring marks of the curse” are not found over the line that defines the boundary of the heavenly Paradise. And “there shall be no night there,” no necessity for such an interruption to labor, because of the unwaning strength and endurance of the physical system. There will be no more significance to “tired nature’s sweet restorer;” no more need of resorting to divers expedients for that soothing influence, without which the body languishes here, and is unfitted for the most trivial demands. As it is, the relations of earth and the conditions of men make the alternation of day and night inevitable and mostly agreeable, though the associations connected with it are strictly characteristic of our mundane sphere. Necessities make things welcome, while

at the same time we deplore the existence of the necessity. Night to the weary laborer is a season of grateful and necessary rest; but if there were no weariness, if one from day to day could engage in the pursuits of active life, and still know unabated vigor, the period between sunset and sunrise would be only an unwelcome break in his career. To men of ambition who love achievement rather than ease, it is often regarded so now, and they have made to themselves long days for the more speedy prosecution of schemes by which they have hoped to benefit themselves and the world, and in consequence have seen their physical energies die out in the noontide of life. Night is a necessity to our race of feeble and limited capacity, and we adore the wisdom and exalt the goodness that made such ample and kindly provision for actual need; but adoration and wonder reach loftier heights when we think of the celestial and brighter world, in which there is "no night," because no necessity for it. Notwithstanding the ideas of quietness and rest are invariably suggested by the night-season, yet how much of sorrow does it know! How many tears have been shed under cover of the night, how many sighs wrung out from broken hearts, and how many groans extorted from those who would fain escape the spirit-crushing influence of some deed which never appeared so dark as in the dark night. How many weary ones have longed for the light, as they counted the clock-beats that measured out the moments so slowly and painfully, as if to prolong the misery of the sufferer! Tossing in the restlessness of pain, the silent watches have been filled with longings and regrets; but even then, if the spirit yield itself to the subduing and chastening influences of the gospel, it sees the stars of faith and hope gleaming in the midnight sky, it catches a glimpse of the near and nightless land, and the pain becomes lighter, the couch softer, and all by the joy of final entrance into a world where there shall be no weary nights. The sable curtains will never be drawn around the inhabitants of the

"Better Land," and the Christian knows it, and rejoices in this blessed peculiarity of his eternal home. There will be no lonely watchers there about beds of pain; for whoso lieth down upon the silken couches of love, as spread by the Eternal hand, lies down to as perfect a rest as can be conceived.

Activity, too, will bring no weariness. The holy energies of the redeemed soul, in the celestial world, will doubtless find occasion for constant activity; and what emotions can we imagine to possess such a one, if, in the midst of some blessed employment, he should see the dim twilight merging into the deeper darkness of night, and thus find the suspension of his joy for a season? O, it cannot be so, "for there shall be no night there!"

"Behold, now, what conceivable and inconceivable advantages rise to our view in the field of reflection thus laid open before us!" says Harbaugh, in his considerations of "the heavenly place."

"'There shall be no night there,' is to say, 'There no dependent or secondary planets exist.' There, consequently, none of the unpleasant extremes involved in day and night are found. There no dark night-sides of nature cover the lovely face of paradisiacal realms. No cycles in the heavenly worlds ever cause the joyous life of the saints to ebb back from the waking energies of bliss into dull stupor, under the overshadowings of darkness and gloom. That world needs no repose; for life, in right relations, is rest in its own peaceful flow of bliss. The ebbings and flowings, which the transition from extremes of light and darkness, and of consequent heat and cold, produce, belong only to a world of imperfection.

"In the night all things are hushed; all life ebbs back toward its source; all energies, like 'weary, worn-out winds,' fall fainting upon the earth, and a solemn prophecy of death, in deep, sepulchral tones, murmurs over land and sea. Flowers fold their beauties to their hearts; birds, like the captives in Babylon, hang their harps in the branches, and sing not in a

strange land. Man, feeling the somnific sympathy, thinks no more, but wanders in dreams; and, instead of enjoying, he lies like a senseless clod, in the dull absence of all joy. But before the words, 'There shall be no night there!' all these signs of imperfection, which here have their cause in the arrangement of the objective world, have forever passed away. There all nature, basking in unsullied light, smiling in the purest joy, and blissfully tremulous in the thrill of eternal life, dawns in upon the spirits of the sainted without measure and without end!"

There are those who understand night in a different sense, and give it such an interpretation as to mean that there is nothing in heaven of which night is the emblem; no darkness, ignorance, or superstition. We have had long moral nights in our world, periods of fearful gloom, and they have been deeply lamented, because of their influence; because that which is true and good is not developed, but left to droop for want of light, its appropriate element.

When we speak of a night of error, or superstition, how much is involved! What pitiable tales it tells of dwarfed minds and hearts, what gloomy records of society, and of the long-felt misery entailed upon it, in consequence of the night!

Passion and prejudice, offspring of darkness, love these seasons, and, in their chosen ways, seek to prolong their reign. But they that love truth mourn over these dreary and wasting periods. Mental and moral darkness is no anomaly here; but, looking upward, we may say, "There is no night there." The soul shall always dwell in light, always be developing in the sunshine of eternal truth. Then will be realized what it is to

"Walk in the light—in the light of God."

And "there was no more sea." A great part of our globe is unfitted for the habitations of men, three fourths of the earth's surface being covered with water. Nations and countries are divided by it, and communication with them becomes a slow and dangerous process. Bands of those who go forth

on various errands are annually swallowed up by the angry ocean. The sea is merciless. Multitudes who have confided themselves and their treasures to its keeping now sleep where it laid them, and what they valued has been deposited in the lowest chambers of the deep, hid away from all mortal gaze. O, what treasures has the sea gathered! How many loved ones has it buried, never giving the consolation to mourning survivors of knowing the place where their dead repose! They only know that the last resting-place is "a lone sea-bed," where the hoarse and sullen waves are ever chanting dirges, and where the sunlight never falls. We look at it when it is calm and placid, every drop sparkling in the sunbeams, and we think of a jewelled tomb, in which a great many loves and hopes are buried. It may be beautiful, but weeping friends forget the gilding in the absorbing grief over what it contains. The gates of the sea-tomb are often thrown open, and hundreds go in together. The people start back, appalled at the sight, and pass on, while desolate hearts, in cottages and hamlets, think ever of the inexorable sea that has taken their joy. Those who would go to distant lands on holiest mission must needs find their way hard by a mighty sepulchre, the shadow of it always resting upon them.

But the sea is necessary. The earth is dependent upon it, and we upon the earth; therefore we and the sea are closely linked. From it come the life and freshness of the vegetable kingdom, the dew and showers which feed our life and minister to our comfort. It has a great replenishing work to do in this world, and it does it well. The sea is beautiful in its serenity, grand in its commotion; but we cannot help thinking it must be a better land where there is no more sea. It is a barrier to the activity of man now; it is one that will not exist there. Life, too, will have no such dependence there. The air of heaven will be delightfully bland and refreshing, but its fruitage will not be nourished by the sea, for there is none in all the land. At the call of the Judge, "the sea shall give

up its dead," and a marshalled host shall come forth, and those who have Canaan's title at hand shall pass in, rejoicing that there is no more sea.

That must, indeed, be a blessed, a most desirable, world which boasts this threefold exclusion — "no curse," "no night," "no sea." Our minds associate woe and unrest with all of these, more or less; and there is nothing in all our life-journey that we crave so much as exemption from woe. We cannot have it where all these things exist; but we hail with joy the assurance that there is a world where they are not. But, to notice still further, there is no more sickness. The inhabitants of the celestial country "shall not say, I am sick." In all that land wasting disease is not known. The "noisome pestilence" will never be permitted to invade that healthful shore, making its victims among the fair innocents. No malaria will be feared, for "the sun shall not smite by day, nor the moon by night." And is there nothing in this? Is it nothing to be delivered from such fears? We are troubled and affrighted at the approach of an epidemic that sweeps numbers into the grave, and avail ourselves of all the means in our power to prevent its attack upon us and our friends; but, notwithstanding, it may prostrate our forms and break the circles that we have guarded so jealously. A great deal of life's sorrow is occasioned by sickness. Look at the invalid, who, for weeks and months, has been confined to a chamber of suffering, with flesh and strength wasting, and tremulous nerves quivering at the slightest touch or sound, while the mind, from unavoidable sympathy, is forced to cease, in great measure, from its wonted activity, or, perhaps, is so much more sensitive as to torture the weary body. It is poor humanity reduced to helplessness, with neither power nor energy to arise. It may be one taken from his daily employment, upon which those that are dearer to him than life are dependent for their comforts, and much privation and hardship are involved. It may be one that is ambitious of working out a worthy and glorious destiny, and it lays him

aside, to change the whole plan and purpose of life, and shows him no prospect but that of struggling along with a painful burden upon his spirit, that must ever be a check to all protracted effort.

Or it may be one with burning zeal to effect much in a good cause, whose soul is consecrated to the work of preaching "the unsearchable riches of Christ," that is prostrated, and at the very outset effectually stayed from the prosecution of the work which lies so near his heart. It makes no difference what their position or calling may be; whether they be rich and great, or poor and lowly; whether they be fitted to do much or little: sickness visits all, and we say to ourselves, How mysterious!

Oftentimes the visitation seems very strange, and we mourn that so many plans are thwarted, so many hopes blasted, and so much promising fruit destroyed. We see the young, the beautiful, and the gifted reluctantly yielding to the dread power, and the maimed, crippled one, living on year after year, every lineament of his countenance strongly testifying to the severity of his pain. Our feelings of pity are kindled, and we shed a sympathizing tear for him whose constant companion is disease. Sympathetic natures will share in the woes of mankind; but outside of their common lot, there is always a private circle, sometimes wider and sometimes narrower, that is more immediately affected, and upon the sanctity of their grief few dare to intrude. Who has not known the sad heart-convulsions that are experienced by those who stand by the bedside of a beloved one, when for the first time the consciousness is forced home that it is the last sickness? None can tell the agony of such a moment; there are no words for the description of that struggle; and yet these struggles are multiplied until in all the earth is heard the low wail of mourners because the dear objects of love are passing away. We may feel, and deeply deplore, the influence of sickness and disease upon ourselves, its many and varied disadvantages; but all this may be borne with fortitude if we may see health smiling upon the loved countenances of those about us, if those in whom our lives are bound

are free from the dire embrace of the foe. But if we are so happy as to reach heaven, we shall both be free ourselves and see those we love smiling in perpetual youth and health forever. Here sickness and disease make their victims look prematurely old, and bring on decay at an early period; but there, where sickness is never known, age and decay are alike strangers. Imagine a countless throng, "whom no man can number," and not one among them in the least impaired by sickness or feebleness, not one faltering in the most vigorous exertion because he fears a painful reaction. Ah! it would seem that the poor, distressed inhabitants of earth, suffering so much from sickness in its thousand forms, would be greatly attracted to a world of which it is said "the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick." Even selfish love might prompt to almost any sacrifice to gain deliverance from an evil so much dreaded. "O, if we could only be free from sickness!" is the ejaculation that we have often heard from the lips of desponding, disheartened ones. Under these circumstances it is counted the highest earthly happiness to be in possession of health. Wealth would be freely given to purchase it, but this cannot avail to procure the priceless boon always, nor often; yet God has made it one of the attractions of his heaven that there is no sickness there, and the conditions of obtaining heaven are the easiest possible. Who would not seek to enter in at any price, to escape so many and so great evils?

"Neither shall there be any more pain." "The former things are passed away," and there is no more cause for pain; but we allude not so much to that which is associated with disease. If there be permanent health of body, there are no painful sensations of the physical nature, but there may be heart-pains which are worse than all these, and they are felt quite as keenly by those with sound body as by others. There is much of sadness and restlessness that is akin to pain, the cause of which can scarcely be told. In the lone and solemn hour of twilight, when spiritual things are more vivid, and earthly things less so, how

often have the bowed head and silent tear told of inward pain ! The soul has been conscious of a great want, and at the same time painfully felt the utter insufficiency of everything about it to satisfy the demand. The clamorous heart-craving has urged, "Give, or I die ;" and failing to receive, life itself has been the sacrifice.

There are aspirations which are never to be realized, and which eat down into the soul, causing more suffering than less ambitious ones can conceive. The struggle of aspiring genius with misfortune has in some instances almost rent soul and body apart. It is far more painful to an eager spirit, that loves activity, to be compelled to relinquish effort, than it would be to task energy to the utmost in a coveted field of labor. In these heart-struggles there is pain. The sudden blighting, too, of fond loves and hopes is another source ; and the convulsive throbbings tell what words will not reveal, what they cannot, for there is something that never yet was told of that mysterious process by which the delicate chords of the human soul are loosened and broken, and left to flutter and sway because of nothing to attach themselves unto. Those who have had experimental knowledge of the fearful rupture, might speak of wounds that never heal, and of pain that never dies out ; but deeper than this is an unspoken something that saddens and shortens life, and robs all things of their brightness.

Even the sun is scarcely bright to one pining with heart-sickness ; he is enveloped by shadows, turn which way he will, while ever and anon he presses his hand upon his heart because of the pain. If he engage in festive scenes, where others are mirthful and glad, his thoughts and affections are lingering elsewhere, among broken and fallen things, and the present has less of influence than the past. We cannot enumerate the sources of pain in this world. Disappointment comes in a thousand forms to the children of men, each bringing its own peculiar smart, under which the writhing and tortured spirit must struggle. Sorrow comes through numberless channels,

often pouring in upon the soul like a flood, sweeping away what it had counted its walls of strength, and the suffering produced amounts to agony. There is no escape from it. One may traverse sea and land, and on remotest shores he finds that with change of place he keeps the pain.

Mortals have no panacea for the pains of the soul. A preparation to heal the broken heart is above human skill. Pain does and will exist in our fallen world, in human hearts, in spite of mortal intervention. There is no respite until the spirit passes through the everlasting gates into that place where there shall be no more pain, where the heart shall find full and perfect satisfaction, and where the chords of the soul will attach themselves to objects that can never fail. There will be no more pain from broken heartstrings there; and this will be a joy to those who have felt the anguish of their sundering here. Joyous intelligence! heaven has balm for the pains of time—sovereign, effectual balm.

“Look up, thou stricken one; thy wounded heart
Shall bleed no more at sorrow’s stern control.”

Thou shalt live without a single painful emotion when thy feet shall tread the shores of immortality, —

“And there shall be no more death.”

The Destroyer will never pass through the golden streets never send his arrows, never aim his darts at one and another, cutting them down in the midst of enjoyment. He is the destroying angel in this world, and here only. Where love is fondest and hopes are strongest, he is present, apparently loving a choice harvest. Heedless of cries and entreaties, he enters the circles which affection most zealously guards, and, laying his icy hand upon the fairest, takes it to his embrace for his own. He takes the infant in its sweetness, the youth in his loveliness, the man of business in the prime of his manhood, as well as the hoary pilgrim of many years, who has lived out nearly his appointed time. He stays not, he asks not for will-

ingness or readiness, but, ready or unready, willing or unwilling, they must bow to his stern decree; they must go at his bidding, however strong the ties that bind them to earth. With slow and silent tread, in all seasons and at all times, he marches on, desolating homes and thinning the ranks of men. Engaged in our wonted pursuits, we are ever and anon startled at the fall of one and another that we have known and loved. Like "a thief in the night" he approaches unawares, often giving no sign of his coming; but, taking his prize, he bears it away to his own realm, and we see it no more. Truly it may be said, "Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death!" He is always abroad in the land. We never know when he may come in upon us.

"Day is for mortal care,
Eve for glad meetings round the joyous hearth,
Night for the dreams of sleep, the voice of prayer;
But all for thee, thou mightiest of the earth."

How many of us have seen the foe come in upon us when we thought ourselves secure! I remember such a time, when the heart-tendrils had been loosened a little, but had twined themselves again more strongly than ever around a loving and happy child, and hope was growing sanguine concerning fruit of rarest excellence. Disease had come and gone, apparently, and we counted upon years of increasing joy. We folded the dear child of our affections to our hearts, and rejoiced in the restoration of a treasure which we fondly hoped to keep for our own. Just then Death came and seized it, bore it away, and hid it from us for all time. We murmur not, because we know he executed the commission of a higher power; but we are led to think more of the world which Death does not invade.

Again, I remember how the spectre came between us and new-born hopes, and quenched the light of anticipation as in a moment; how, in an instant, it buried the expectation of hearts forever, leaving us to feel, in the bitterness of our souls, that there is really nothing abiding upon earth. And this is not

isolated experience : we have all been witness to similar scenes, and we all know that there is "a time to die," and that it cometh on apace. There is no day without its death-scenes, no hour but, somewhere in the world, Death pauses on his journey to call out new victims to swell his ranks, and as often are heard the wailings of grief because they must go. If there be such a thing as the light of life going out, it is when we stand by the clay-cold form of one that we have loved, and see *last* written upon everything. The last word has been spoken, the last smile bestowed, the last look given, and the last loving pressure of the hand been felt, and all is still with the one who has walked and talked with us. There is no more interchange of thought, feeling, or affection, and within are a vacancy and anguish that cannot be told.

We may look down into the depths of the soul as into a gulf, and tremble, not at the "forms crowding it," but at the ever-recurring consciousness that living, breathing forms which were wont to leave light and joy wherever they went, have been seen for the last time ; for Death takes, but never restores. He is a grim monarch, and shows no pity, and his subjects are those whom he chooses, and his realm is the wide world. He works as he wills, sometimes slaying thousands, and again taking but one from a family ; now prostrating one in the glory of strength, and passing by one that has long been waiting for his coming ; still again pausing at the threshold of the weary, and sending a dart into the bosom of the hopeful and buoyant. He is universally dreaded. "I can take pain and sickness to my home," said one, "for there may be mitigation for the one and restoration from the other ; but death puts an end to all hope, and leaves me only the sad necessity of hoping no more." The greatest of all misery is that which death brings. One may have trouble, disappointment, and sorrow, and, amid the intensity, imagine that all the billows are gone over him ; but if he is unvisited by the angel of death, he has yet a cup to drink that he knows not of. There is some-

thing in this mixture peculiarly bitter. It is harder to drink than any other potion that is presented to mankind. We speak now of death as an evil in the world, without reference to the preparations and pledges which Christianity offers to make it seem not only less terrible but even a gain to die.

Death does exist, and by seeing what desolations it makes in the earth, what grief it awakens, and what loneliness it occasions, we may look up, and better appreciate the grateful contrast when it is said, "There shall be no more death" in the New Jerusalem; and if there be no death, then there is no mourning. But we are not left to mere inference in this particular, for it is said in the place where all sayings are true, "The days of thy mourning shall be ended."

When the suspicious garment was presented to the patriarch Jacob that silently proclaimed a tragic scene in the life of his favorite son, he saw nothing between him and the grave but mourning. He looked down the rest of his pilgrimage, and everything conspired to make it seem a mournful period. So we have heard of those—perhaps seen them—who have buried all their smiles and all their joys in the grave. They left them there when they lowered some precious form, a seeming legacy to the departed, and they go about their daily walks, sad and forsaken, themselves finding a shorter path to the "voiceless chambers" in consequence. With sable robes, and equally sable hopes, they go about the business of life, because they must; and their sorrow is deep and real. But few, if any, understand the peculiarity of their grief, and therefore the fullness of sympathy is denied them, and they go on mourning alone. There are weary days and nights; burdens upon the spirit that weigh it down, and fearful seasons that none but God knows. Stricken ones, there is no mourning in heaven. It is ended there; not a sign or a symbol of it remains. There is no mourning over sickness, for all are well there. There is no mourning because of the ravages of Death, for he can never invade those blessed regions of light and love. There are no

tearful, mournful burials there, with slow procession winding sadly along. These belong to earth, and while they are seen and known there will be mourning, for none can bear the friends and companions of life to the congregation of the dead and not mourn in anguish of spirit. "Would to God I had died for thee!" has been the expression of many since the day in which the doting heart of David mourned the sudden fall of his beloved Absalom. It has been felt in many a humble home, when the light of love has gone out forever, — in many a heart that has seemed utterly forsaken, because the idol was removed from its place.

There will be no mourning because of unrequited love. It is productive of keen sorrow to love with the unquenchable ardor of a sensitive nature, and find that love poorly, if at all, reciprocated. To be willing to make sacrifices in order to perform, continually, acts of kindness for the benefit and gratification of one we love much, and then see them unappreciated, will always and inevitably create heart-sadness. But there will be nothing of this in heaven.

There will be no mourning because of decaying friendships, for they never cool there. It is one of the sorrows of this world, to see our friends grow cold, negligent, forgetful, withdrawing not only the profession, but the more valuable tokens that tell of a kindly interest at heart. These things are consequent upon our imperfect social state, and they all produce sadness, but they are done away in heaven; and more than this, all other evils are so far removed that there is no mourning there. O, happy exemption! Well may the soul of the believer kindle with a holy joy, as once and again he is told that the things he dreads find no entrance into the bright world to which he goes. Take heart, ye who mourn over the blighted fields of your care; look to the green plains beyond — "there is no more sorrow there." It flees away before the tide of blissful joy that sweeps on, "in one delightful stream," through all the heavenly country. The long-drawn sighs that we know

indicate sorrow of heart, and are fed from the life's fountain, are forever banished from the land above. "Sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

There will be no tears in heaven. "The voice of crying shall be no more heard." "Long, long eternities must we follow the Lamb before meeting one whose eyes are red with weeping." Never, in all the intercourse of heaven, with all the ransomed host that people the land of the evermore, shall we find the moistened eye that tells of sorrow and suffering. "The spiritual eye does not secrete tears." The exhortation to "weep with those that weep" is applicable only to probationers of time. There is no occasion for sympathy in the upper world, at least in the sense in which it is regarded here. "All tears are wiped away, and the redeemed only rejoice with those that do rejoice."

The meetings and greetings of friends are often answered here only by the silent flow of tears, because of mutual bereavement and remembrances, that stir the fount of grief within to overflowing; and it speaks a depth of sorrowful feeling that words are powerless to express. The sight of such emotion in strangers kindles the flame of compassion, and we feel the sympathetic tear stealing down our own cheek for unknown woe. The whole world is called a "vale of tears," and pilgrims go journeying on, wetting pillows and graves with their tears. We find them everywhere. "I shall never forget a little incident of foreign travel," says one. "After months spent in noting points of resemblance and contrast between other countries and our own, — after viewing persons in all situations, from the throne downward, — one day, in the street, I observed a lady in tears. Among the thousands met with, this was the first instance of visible grief. It was impressive. The thought at once arose, Then they weep here, too! Here, as on the western continent, are tongues charged with venom! And sensitive hearts are beating and bleeding as at home." It is ever thus.

“The world is telling
Startling things of human woe,
While ten thousand hearts are dwelling
On the griefs but One can know.”

Neglect, unkindness, and wrong in any form, wring out tears from sensitive souls, and cause heartfelt anguish; and there are seasons in the history of almost every one, oft-recurring hours, when the fountain is unsealed without apparent cause, and sadness subdues the spirit. It is a peculiar earth-sadness, and will vanish on the other side, for “the voice of weeping shall be no more heard” there. So too there is no danger there. “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.” Timid souls may roam at will, and fear not the slightest trouble. Fearful apprehensions are strangers to those that dwell in Paradise. There was no fear in Eden before there was sin there; so there will be no fear in heaven, where sin is not. In this sin-abounding world we are exposed to danger on every side; and at different periods of its history we see it the occasion of fearful danger, and even death, to espouse Christianity, the best and only pure thing that we know. In every century outrages that kindle righteous indignation to think of them, have been perpetrated against the friends and followers of goodness and truth.

Dangers, seen and unseen, thickly beset our individual pathways. In the midst of our happiest songs, in our gayest and lightest moments, we may be on the verge of some terrible disaster, that will change every glad note into one of saddest woe. Prospects may never seem brighter and fairer than when a cloud of deepest darkness is about to pour its floods of gloom upon us.

The light-hearted children of a large company on a railway train were singing merry songs in highest glee, and while yet the words were upon their lips, a fearful collision silenced their voices forever. The sound of the Pemberton crash is still ringing in our ears, and that momentary burial of so many

human creatures will not soon be forgotten. One moment in the confidence of perfect security, and the next struggling, or beyond the reach of struggle. Verily, "in the midst of life we are in death." Dangers thicken, and we know not what is but just before us. A step forward may be to a fearful experience, and yet it must be taken. Everything is done at risk that we attempt; and how often do we feel that a sense of security would lighten the heaviest task! That feeling, in its perfection, is known only in heaven. There may be something of it in this state of uncertainty; but perfect freedom from every danger, complete deliverance from all fear, is the boon of the saints who have conquered and dwell in Mount Zion above—that holy mount, where "nothing shall hurt or destroy."

If there are mountains in the New Jerusalem, the fearless inhabitants will find the loftiest heights accessible, without frightful precipice or anything to make afraid. There is no danger there. Be it valley or plain, hill or dale, serpents never hiss there, and poisonous plants never grow. O, blessed are the fearless band—blessed they who tread celestial ground! "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." In proportion to our hatred of sin, in proportion to the extent in which we comprehend the effects of sin, will be our appreciation of this blessed knowledge. What a charm has perfect purity to the Christian, mourning over the power of indwelling sin, and its manifestations about him in society! Everything is tainted with selfishness, or bears the marks of some other passion, so that oftentimes even innocence of expression is made the instrument of torture to the well-meaning one, and he feels the necessity of a rigid scrutiny of thought, word, and action constantly, lest, in unguarded moments, an influence go forth that shall be perverted to his own hurt, or the injury and reproach of others. Virtue, that should be "pure and undefiled," is rare. Christians love it, and they will see it in glorious form and proportion when they pass the threshold of their heavenly home. It is sullied

here, but unsullied there, for nothing that defileth entereth that place. Not a stain — not a “spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” is found there.

Besides, there is no fruitless labor there. “They shall not build and another inhabit.” Not that there will be selfish appropriation of anything. The law of love is the only law, and perfect benevolence will therefore fill and actuate every heart, so that labor through motives of self-love and desire for promotion will not be known at all. All things will be in common, and what is the joy of one will be the joy of all; not, either, that there are no degrees, no difference of capacity or taste; but the mainspring of action will be alike in all, and that is love — pure, perfect love. To gain for self will not enter into the calculations of the saints. They “can look, year after year, at the jasper and topaz in the foundation, at the immense pearls in the gates, and at the pure gold everywhere, without once wishing to appropriate anything to themselves.” Covetousness is the growth of this lower sphere, and stays this side. Pilgrims throw it down before they go in, as something wholly unfit for the holy place; and it is. Doubtless there will be labor in heaven: it may be constant and unceasing, but it will all be to some noble end; it will all yield the richest return. Fruitlessness of labor, and consequent disappointment, will never be experienced, for there will be perfect understanding and perfect aptness in every new thing that is attempted, and complete success will always crown all effort. Upon how many schemes of time is written *defeat*, over and over again, until patient and hopeful inventors despair, and perhaps abandon them altogether! Should they prosper, they might, or might not, be productive of great and good results; but in heaven there are glorious results connected with every achievement, for it is begun, prosecuted, and ended in the highest wisdom. Tired laborers of earth, you may plan and build, spend and lose, and have little good of “labor under the sun;” but in the “better country” “they shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord.”

"They shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them."

They are to dwell there forever, to reap rewards; and what a harvest it must be! What glorious sheaves must those be which the saints gather on their rich plains! Travellers to the future world, is there no charm in such possessions as these?

If we do not know everything there is in heaven, we yet are blessed in knowing that a great many things are not there. If it were not for this and that, "I should be perfectly happy," have we not heard many say? Those things are not in heaven. What is it to be pure—perfectly pure? Who can tell? The thought is rapturous; but methinks the rapture is inconceivable that will thrill the whole spiritual being, when it shall be filled with intensity of joy, occasioned by the consciousness, "I am, I shall ever be, where there is no sin." Imagine what it will be to have no cause for the shedding of a tear, or the breathing of a sigh; to see no sickness, feel no pain, and experience nothing that is mournful. Conceive, if possible, what it will be to have eternal sunshine, a land without curse or sea, without danger or defilement; and say, is not such an inheritance infinitely more desirable than any or all things that are yet known? What a blessed, a glorious representation! What can compare with the Celestial City? It is no marvel that those who are almost there have so much of gladness—that they are so eager to plume their wings and soar away into such a region as heaven.

Think of the blind convert from Hindooism saying in his last moments, "I see, I see!" and what did he see? He saw this bright world of which we are speaking, he had a glimpse of its beauty, and under the impression he exclaimed, "I glory," and expired. Thrice blessed those to whom the King shall say, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Heaven is, indeed, a "prepared place," but it is for a "prepared people."

CHAPTER XXIII.

POSITIVE BLISS OF THE HEAVENLY WORLD.

Whisperings of Prophecy. — Music an Element of heavenly Bliss. — Joy of actual Service. — Varied Affirmations. — The sealed Brow. — Wondrous Light. — Rest. — Exemption from painful Sensation. — The Way open through the Atonement. — Human Conception inadequate to the Formation of so perfect a Heaven in Thought.

“What realm lies forward, with its happier store
Of forests green and deep,
Of valleys hushed in sleep,
And lakes most peaceful? ’Tis the land of Evermore.

“On that joyous shore,
Our lighted hearts shall know
The life of long ago :
The sorrow-burdened past shall fade for Evermore.” — *Anon.*

“PERHAPS it is most becoming,” said Socrates, in speaking of a future world, “for one who is about to travel there, to inquire and speculate about the journey thither; what kind we think it is.” Shall a philosopher of the dim twilight reason thus, and we of the noonday act otherwise? Shall we, who have the “sure word of prophecy,” the firm promise of a blessed immortality as the reward of faithful obedience, shall we be indifferent to the slightest thing concerning the great future, or what regards the journey thither? It is called the great Unknown, and perhaps with some propriety, since mortal comprehension must fall below the truth; yet we are richly favored with some knowledge respecting it — enough to kindle a steady flame upon the altars of faith and hope, and give strength to desire. God singled out and commissioned holy men to tell us of his works and ways, and when the volume was well nigh finished, and

the last writer took up his pen, he had such views of the resplendent glory of the final home of the faithful, that he poured out his soul in the description, and yet found it inadequate to a full display. Prophets and evangelists had rejoiced in the whisperings, that had come to their ears from the Holy Spirit of the establishment of a peaceful realm made glad by God's presence, and apostles had been cheered in "great tribulation" by the assurance of good things to come, which was divinely granted; but to none was given such rich and full communication as to him who loved much, in the days of Jesus; who was taken "in the spirit" to behold the magnificence of heaven, and the glory within. Others had told us what it is not, but John tells us what it is; and from the combination issues a completeness that was never before reached—a splendor and richness of coloring that were never before revealed.

It was not a faint reflection of the far-off, when he stood upon the "high mountain," and was showed "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God," and having his glory. It was no dim and doubtful radiance coming into his soul, but light, exceeding the brightness of the sun, from the very centre of the "holy city" itself. He saw the jewelled walls, the pearly gates, and golden streets, and heard the sweet songs of those who dwelt there, and came down to teach mortals the notes, that they might be fitted to join in the anthem when they should be carried in the spirit to the mountain of the Lord, the heaven of his love. It was not the sweet echo of distant, melodious sound that gently stirred the holy emotions of his soul, for he stood where he caught distinctly the words of the song, and it was this that kindled all the love of his ardent nature, for he cherished sentiment kindred to that which it inspired, since he knew no virtue save that infused by the life-giving blood of Him to whom the glad tribute was rendered.

It was joyous music to him, and it will be to all the redeemed. When the first ransomed spirit entered the gates of

Paradise, "a new song" was begun, that shall increase in richness and power as new voices swell the delightful symphony. Music will be one of the attractions of heaven. We know not much of the soft-toned instruments of the place; but there are harps there, and those who play on them touch the strings to loftiest note. Never will be heard more thrilling melody than proceeds from the celestial choir, for its members have been educated by a Master whose advent here angels heralded with songs of peace — peace begun on earth and perfected in heaven. Heaven's arches will ring as the ransomed ones join in one mighty chorus, to sing of the salvation that has been wrought for them by the Lamb. "Their glorious Leader claims their praise," and with "one united breath," they will "ascribe their conquest to the Lamb, their triumph to his death." They will sing of deliverance, and sweet will be that song to those who have long been oppressed. They will sing of "blessing," and it will fill the bosoms of the saints with ineffable praise; of "honor," and it will be grateful indeed to those who have loved uprightness; of "glory," and it will excite untold sensations of bliss; of "power," and it will inspire devout recognition of a guiding influence that has led them on to such perfection. They sing, too, of the "forever;" but who shall describe the sweetness and fulness of that strain, "Salvation to our God"? As they chant it, they turn reverently and adoringly "to Him that sitteth upon the throne," for it is he who wrote the words and set them to such blissful music. All idea of song is centred in this. Not a note or a strain wanting to make it the most perfect harmony that ever entranced the soul.

It was ravishing to John's spirit as he heard it, and the remembrance of it never died out. So much did it influence him, so ardently did he long to mingle his songs with theirs, that almost his last recorded words are, "Come, Lord Jesus," — as if he would hasten away from all other things and employments to engage in so divine a service as singing to the praise of Him

he loved, in his immediate presence. Ye whose souls are tuned to song, who find special delight in this loved employment, there is music in heaven. Its every influence upon the character will be highly ennobling and inspiring. Those, too, who cannot sing here, will be admitted to the choir above, for there they will understand the measure of that tune which exalts Him who reigneth omnipotent and holy, for it is love that inspires "heaven's sweetest lays, and fills its shining courts with praise."

And there are such "whose bosoms glow with love," and consequently have the best preparation for striking with effect the heavenly harps when they are called to the assembly of the saints in the Jerusalem above. We have heard music here that has kindled ecstasy in the soul, and sent thoughts and desires on and up after the perfect; but, after all, the sweetness of heavenly music cannot be conceived. Holy, song-loving soul, there is much of this — there is enough of this to enrapture thee in the land whither thou art tending. There are ten thousand sweets floating upon the summer air. We cannot gather them up, and yet we know they minister abundantly to the happiness of the senses. There is always something that eludes our grasp when we attempt to catch and confine this heavenly sweetness here; but we know it will pour its glad influence over the whole being when we stand with those that sing "Alleluia" on the celestial shore, and breathe the air of heaven. That which is sweet here, we know, will be sweeter there. Song has a heavenward tendency to pious souls. "What the wings are to the sky-mounting lark is sacred music to my soul," said one; "it bears my soul to heaven." We know that the Swiss, exiled from their mountain homes, are strangely affected by one of their own national songs. At such seasons their hearts are melted into tenderness, love, and longings, because of the associations of home; so the songs of Zion often affect the Christian who is away from his heavenly home — an exile upon earth. They remind him of things which his soul loveth, and to the

full fruition of which he hasteth. Blessed are they who shall sing the Lord's songs in his own land.

It is also written of such, "They shall see his face." Whose face? That of Jesus, their Beloved—that of God, their Friend. Every channel of communication that can be opened between us and an absent friend does not satisfy us. It is always regarded a very poor compensation for the living, actual presence, to receive the few and imperfect forms of thought afforded by a narrow sheet. Every attempt of this kind makes us long to annihilate time and space, that we may be reunited with the object of love, see face to face, and pour out the heart fully and freely. The loving heart feels that union is the height of joy. The pleasure is manifest in every feature, and the whole countenance beams with unwonted gladness; but what meeting can compare with that of the Christian and his Lord? The burden of letters from the loving and absent is, "Would that we might meet," so that free interchange of thought and affection might be enjoyed, untroubled by misconception or anything of the kind. There is no love like the divine love, and nothing to be compared with its blessed interchange. It is pure and perfect. It satisfies the soul; therefore, when the saint meets his Lord face to face, there will be nothing more for him to ask. The smile of welcome that will beam from the face of his Redeemer will fill every aspiration and satisfy every desire. The "Come, blessed" will enable him to lift up his head "with songs and everlasting joy," for the longed-for meeting has come, and there will be no more parting—he is forever with the Lord. There are no more pining and regret by reason of absence, no sending of coincommunication, and no fear that it be not rightly directed. There is no more anxiety lest the union never be realized, for all fear is lost in the blessedness of the result, the actual beholding of that face which hath "overpowering charms," and the actual recognition of that delightful sound, after all the fears and struggles of his life-absence, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." There he shall always look upon the face of the Anointed One,

and ever discover some new trace of beauty and excellence. To lose sight of it, would be to lose the peculiar attraction of the holy city. It is the light of the celestial sphere, the glory of the heavenly place.

The removal of one smiling, loving face from our household upon earth is the occasion of much sadness, and we go about our daily avocations mourning because of the withdrawal of so much light and love; and if it is not spoken audibly, we at least whisper to ourselves that this world is dreary, because something has come between us and the sunshine of our life. Yet it were better to lose sight of everything else rather than the face of Jesus. There is no heaven for the soul anywhere, unless it can have the presence of its Redeemer. Then it can rest, and then only, when it can look into his face and read its eternal and glorious destiny. There is no doubt, for it is expressly written of believers, that when they reach their home in the City of God, the "banner of love" shall be over them, and "they shall see his face" — the face of their Saviour. We have seen the fond, earnest, lingering gaze; we have seen eyes meet with expression that told attachment stronger than words could express, and the sacred seal of friendship has been applied with a warmth produced by heart-action, and we have thought the scene touching, and the love fervent, and said there must be happiness in this; but there is no meeting that can symbolize that which shall take place when "the ransomed of the Lord shall return to Zion," and see him face to face. There are so many elements in this that are wanting in all other meetings! Everything is perfect, and the holy soul rejoices in the full appropriation of it. It is bliss without measure, joy without restraint.

"His servants shall serve him." The idea of service, may not be altogether pleasant to some. Indeed, they turn away and refuse entirely allegiance to the King of heaven, having no sympathy with him, and no delight in his ways. To such there is nothing attractive in the expression, "his servants shall serve

him." It is rather the reverse — dull, and repulsive ; but there are those that think and feel otherwise. John felt so when he was favored with the vision that made his soul flame with desire to be in the heavenly place, and engage in the delightful service of saints. Ask Whitefield, Edwards, Nettleton, and a host of kindred spirits, what is chief and best, and with one united voice they say, to be counted worthy to be employed in God's service upon earth, and have that service perfected in heaven ; and it is not from a few only of the eminent ones who dwelt on the heights of Zion, but from all retired and lowly places comes the same witness, It is good to serve the Lord. There is nothing that yields such rich returns, nothing that gives such perfect satisfaction, in all emergencies and under all circumstances, as this. The service of the world brings weariness of body and heaviness of spirit ; it chafes the conscience and induces regret continually, thereby rendering life "like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed ;" while the Christian on his way can speak of "calm and serene" frames, which enable him to pursue truth and duty effectually, though it involve much labor. There are no maxims of worldly prudence the practical application of which accomplishes so much for the children of time as the short and simple direction of the apostle, "be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." By the latter all things are done to advantage, and service becomes invested with the highest possible meaning. We are made for this. However reluctant we may be to acknowledge it, yet in our heart of hearts we cherish the conviction that there is nothing to compare, in beauty and desirableness, with the service of the divine Saviour. There is nothing more enviable than to be truly called a servant of the Most High, to have a divinely-recognized familiarity with the Great Master ; and those in the enjoyment of this are in no way more affected than by the infinite condescension which allows such a relation, and their own inability to meet its demands. With a devout and grateful appreciation of the goodness that brings them to such terms,

they go on rejoicing, and yet mourning that they can do so little, where so much is merited. They count it their highest joy to be a servant of Christ, to sit at his feet, to learn of him. To their souls, the lowliest place, if Jesus look down and smile upon them, is a "gate of heaven," through which they discern glorious things which await them when the period of earthly service ends, and the heavenly begins. "Blessed service!" said one of these; "I would know no other;" and he but echoed the sentiments of many others. It matters not so much to what they may be called. Everything is done cheerfully and well, for their thoughts are with the "well done," which shall issue from the lips of their Master when he shall bid them come up higher, and engage in better and more congenial employments — better because more perfect — congenial because the minglings of sin appear no more. It is this that makes the Christian heart appreciate so much the expression, "his servants shall serve him." It is this that invests the heavenly service with such indescribable charms, and awakens the longings of pious souls for its full enjoyment.

There may be something menial in serving an earthly monarch, something degrading in occupying the position of a servant, as men of the world regard it, but there is nothing of this in obedience to Christ. There is no title so enviable as "servant of God," none that implies so good and lasting an inheritance. There is none so much to be coveted. To be the possessor of a whole world, of countless worlds, would not be so much as to be counted a faithful servant of Jesus. The advantage such large empire would bring to the soul would be as nothing in the comparison.

Angels serve the Lord with gladness. They fly on swiftest wing to fulfil the commands of their Sovereign, whether it be a nation's weal, or that of a single, humble individual; and to what loftier position could saint or angel aspire to than to wait upon God? Let the commission be what it may, the redeemed will hasten to its execution. It will be felt to be

enough to stand before the throne, and go at the divine bidding, in furthering the great designs of Him who sitteth thereon.

Love makes any service pleasant. It will make the heavenly inconceivably so. Know, then, this, O Christian, of thy endless home — "His servants shall serve him." When thou shalt expand thy wings, and mount up into the sky, pass the sun, and gain thy Father's house, "and drink with angels at the fount of bliss," thou shalt experience the freedom of service — such service as will be a perpetual delight in the soul.

Moreover, "his name shall be in their foreheads." There will be no mistaking any of all the flock that wander through the green pastures of the better land. The Great Shepherd will know each one of the mighty multitude; for his name is written upon them as an everlasting seal. In glittering letters the name of Jesus will appear upon the brow of every saint. Pearls and diamonds fade away before this priceless ornament. Richest gems and costliest crowns shrink into insignificance and lose their brilliancy in the contrast. Victors in Olympic games, in ancient times, were crowned with various garlands of evergreen, according to the merit of achievement. These were the signal for triumphal shouts from an enthusiastic crowd, which sent exultation to the hearts of the honored ones. The laurel was full of significance; it spoke of triumph, and every leaf was valued for this. Honor was associated with it, and it designated those who had been so faithful as to win. They counted success in this direction a glory; but how does this compare with that of him, who, victorious over sin, passes through the gates of the Celestial City to have the name of Jesus written upon his forehead, which is forever to distinguish him, among the host of God's elect, as a true and triumphant conqueror? There is no glory like unto this; no triumph that bears any comparison with it. A crown of laurel withers before a crown of righteousness. The holy characters traced upon the brow of the ransomed one who has run the life-



race, and reached the goal, will constitute a coronal that will never lose its brightness and beauty. It will shine through the limitless ages a perpetual witness, to tell what has been wrought. To the victor himself it will serve to keep him in remembrance of what he has passed through, the difficulty and danger. Ever, as he beholds it in the transparent mirror of heaven, he will be gratefully reminded of what it cost, and be conscious of a new and deeper thrill of joy that uncertainty is removed, and the final victory won.

Henceforth he is to be known by the name that is upon him. We know of bands who have their own significant emblems. They are known by the badge they carry, — a key, perchance, may lock secrets that must not be revealed, or a pin may clasp what the world may not know.

So there are fraternities, with mysterious signs that insure the recognition of kindred souls the world over, though they may never have met before. These are their talismans, as it were. Once lost, and they feel like the mariner without compass or chart to guide him on his perilous voyage.

There are companies that are known by their uniform; organizations that are known by a word around which widespread associations cluster, and all to distinguish the members as a peculiar class, a separate people, having obligations from which others are exempt, and enjoyments which others may not participate. Their name and office are stamped upon them; they glory in these; but *Transient* is the appropriate inscription for them all. They are imperfect, perishable, and unsatisfying. Such may boast of union, but not infrequently it is disunion. They may talk of advantage; but not seldom it is damage in the highest degree. The gain may be considerable, or it may be doubtful; but there is no doubt among the company who stand on Mount Zion, with the name of Jesus written in their foreheads. This is a heavenly organization, complete and perfect, and the union is close and loving. They are,

indeed, a peculiar people, having pleasures that others know not of. The password of those who enter is *Jesus*, and there is no concealment. It is written out plainly — a beautiful and glorious frontlet, which appears for the mutual admiration of all saints eternally. It is a bond of sympathy between them. By this they recognize their oneness with each other, and with Christ. Wherever they go, they behold the name and the image of Him whom they love. To them Jesus is the sun and centre, and his name they choose above all to have written within and without, to have appearing and sounding continually and constantly. Blessed are they who belong to the company of Christ, who join the society of the saints. They have their badge, and carry their sign, and they tell of secrets that are never revealed save to those who come into membership. The full advantage cannot be realized except one be initiated into the holy mysteries; except he be brought into full fellowship, and know and understand by experience what meaneth the communion of saints. A blessed and honorable distinction awaiteth all such in the kingdom of the blest; for, when "his name shall be written in their foreheads," they shall be "kings and priests" with such power and dominion as they have never before known or conceived.

Earthly thrones and sceptres speak of honor and preferment; but the one is only a breath, and the other short-lived and temporary, with fear and anxiety to imbitter it. Who would not rather have "the honor that cometh from God," and wield the peaceable sceptre of righteousness with no diminution or decay, under circumstances that preclude all possibility of danger or doubt?

Such is the position in prospect for all the subjects of grace who come into the holy order of the redeemed with the spirit that becometh them. They shall stand before the great white throne with dignity and honor; for He who sitteth there beholds his seal, and recognizes his own. Aspiring soul,

be this thy care, to secure the priceless and imperishable ornament for thy head, the name of Jesus.

Another most delightful affirmation of the heavenly state by another apostle, is that of rest.

"There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God." He who penned this sentence was fitted, in a peculiar sense, to appreciate this element of his future life, and multitudes upon earth who are faithfully prosecuting a slow and perilous journey to the immortal land, are moved likewise with the same feeling. Tribulation and persecution did an effectual work of discipline for the nature and heart of Paul, and, amid the faintings of the one and strugglings of the other, he was cheered and sustained by the consideration of what was coming. Though often weary and toil-worn with wasting labor, grateful visions of the future came up before him, and he saw a long season of undisturbed rest, that would fully and perfectly compensate for the most protracted earth-weariness; besides, holy effort might give it new charms, and bring more to enjoy it with him. There are kindred spirits in the world now; and said one of them, who was wearing out his life in the sacred cause, "How delightful to think there is a place of rest, a world from which all weariness and anxiety are excluded!"

To how many is it a cheering — a precious word! "My chief conception of heaven is rest," said Robert Hall, who was borne down with the keenest suffering almost from the first to the last hour of his earthly pilgrimage. "O, this weariness, this restlessness!" said another, whose pain-tortured body scarcely knew rest, but whose spirit was panting for holy action; "yet I know that it is but temporary, for in heaven 'the weary are at rest.'" Tired bodies will not be known there. Exertion will never produce languor, for rest, in its purest, best, and highest sense, is for the "people of God" when they enter the world that is eternal. The assurance is like balm to the sufferer. He may bear patiently and heroically the pains and ills

of mortality, if there be hope of relief. Vigorous exertion and protracted effort can be sustained for a time, if there be prospect of a season for the restoration of wasted energy. So the Christian may be faithful in his "arduous work" for "there remaineth a rest." Oftentimes he is ready to exclaim, under the burden and heat of his mortal day, —

"Gladly away from this toil would I hasten,
Up to the crown that for me has been won," —

but the long day of respite from weary toil will be sufficient. The rest will be sweeter, and the crown brighter, for a life of faithfulness and duty. It will not only be physical rest, — it will be rest for the soul, and that in its most engaging form. It is not only the body that fails to endure in its ministrations, but the spirit "tires and faints," on the thorny way over which it must go in its passage to the Celestial City. The flesh is unequal to the desires and aims of a devoted spiritual being. Constant effort and longings for the attainment of Christian perfection oftentimes increase the tenuity of the earthly, beside lessening the energy of the spiritual; but as God will have from his saints a "spiritual worship, suited to his own spiritual being, he will provide them a spiritual rest, suited to their nature." It will be seasonable and suitable. How much is comprehended in it! "Christian, this is a rest after thine own heart; it contains all that thy heart can wish — that which thou longest, prayest, laborest for: there thou shalt find it all." The word will have a new significance, and the grateful soul will have a full appreciation of its meaning. An antepast of this produced the rapture in the soul which induced the lines, —

"There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast."

O, blessed "rest that remaineth" after the struggles and toils

incident to the pilgrimage of life ! It is a joy to the weary, a comfort and solace to the fainting and oppressed.

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." Food and drink are necessary to the growth and development of the physical system. If they be withdrawn, the springs of life begin to fail at their source, and soon cease altogether ; and the process is one which involves not only unpleasant sensations, but keen suffering. Few, perhaps, are wholly strangers to the debilitating influences which are consequent upon the suspension of food. If prolonged, sickness, depression, and utter inability, are the inevitable results. The healthy system craves its due, and unless it be obtained there is sad derangement.

The body must be cared for, or it will die, and the spirit be powerless to fulfil its mission ; and much time is consumed in thought concerning it. Although it monopolizes more time than is really necessary, yet it is not to be denied that some, and even much, is indispensable for its pressing and actual need. Were it not for these constant and ever-recurring wants of the animal nature, how much more cultivation might be bestowed upon the higher faculties !

How many noble aspirations have been held in check, how many purposes kept within longing souls, and how many hearts have mourned because of the necessities that were upon them, which they were bound to regard, or lessen their days ! These things are among the trials of the world. Hungerings and thirstings, life and happiness, are inwoven, and they cannot be separated. As it is, we acknowledge it a wise relation — a merciful provision ; but we turn with very pleasant emotions toward a land where the people shall never hunger nor thirst. This seems a most desirable experience. The idea, at once, elevates our conceptions, for we think no more of animal propensities clamoring for indulgence. Every thing is merged into the spiritual, and is, consequently, higher and holier — as much better as the one exceeds the other in real worth.

But these sensations are not confined simply to the body. The soul has yearnings and cravings. It hungers and thirsts and cannot be fully satisfied with what it finds below. It may find aliment appropriate in quality, but never obtains sufficient quantity to satisfy its demand. It may drink copious draughts from the infinite fountain, but still it thirsts; nothing earthly can equal its wants. Its thirst will never be slaked until it drinks of the "water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb." Here, sin always adds its mixture, pouring its bitterness into the choicest cups; and Christians' taste can never be satisfied with this. It is, indeed, a hallowed condition for the heavenly-minded soul if it thirst, and continue to thirst for holiness, for "blessed" is written of such; yet the fulfilment of the blessing — its culmination — is to be found only in heaven. There "the sting of sin having been extracted, the thirst of the soul will be only a healthful and joyous appetite."

There will be no more engrossing care for an exacting body, or an anxious soul, for at the table of royal bounty "they shall be filled." How welcome the assurance! "To him who has sounded the depths of all terrestrial provisions for the craving of an immortal soul, and found that it is neither in things nor in persons to fill the void, it is an assurance full of hope"! It tells of blessed opportunity — of steady and endless progression in a holy and happy life. This element, then, in the destiny of believers, is not small, for it will be no light advantage to "hunger no more, neither thirst any more." Well may it be said, Blessed are the saints. Prominent among the external advantages enumerated by the apostle, which conspire to enhance the pleasure of the heavenly inhabitants, is this, that "the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it." It is counted a great honor to approach unto a throne upon which sits a king clothed in his regal majesty, surrounded by his officers and lords ready to do his bidding. It is only the few of unwonted dignity and position that are allowed the honor, and they are care-

ful to clothe themselves in costly robes, and acquaint themselves with court rules, that they may deport themselves with due propriety before the august assembly. The pomp and pageantry of the court serve as a theme for eloquent discussion in all the circles to which they are admitted afterwards. The gems which compose the crown, and the adornments of the throne, have each their share of admiration and praise; and prominent in all is the honor of having been permitted to look upon such splendor. It may indeed be fair to look upon — even brilliant; but do we not know that it will fade away? There is only one kingdom that is everlasting, and only one throne that endures. The stability of any province is its glory, and the safety of a throne is the joy of the king. It is written of all the kingdoms of the world that they shall fall, and of sceptres that they shall vanish; and why stand in such awe of the monarch of a day? Why so much honor in looking at a mortal whose life-conditions are the same as those of others? It is, indeed, something to be accounted honor, and that in wonderful degree, to be permitted to come in before Him who is "King of kings" and Monarch over all. It is truly nothing short of infinite condescension that permits any to approach his immaculate throne, and behold its glory, and yet the invitation is free. It does, indeed, require a court dress, and the observance of certain rules; but the dress is provided and the rules given, so that if one see Him not, there is no excuse. It is only a few of the wealthy and great that can have access to the place of kings upon the earth; but "whosoever will" may stand before the "great white throne" with spotless robe and approved demeanor. The gates of heaven open soonest to the humble, and within is the "throne of God," surrounded by those who welcome the coming of each new guest. The proud attendants of earthly kings may look with scornful eye upon those who come with sounding title and pretended worth; but not such the glances cast upon the newly-arrived by the pure and benevolent ones around the heavenly throne.

But the throne itself! Who shall describe its glory? John

thought it enough to say it was there. It was the attraction of the place, for the God he loved would surely inhabit the place. Mercy and righteousness were sparkling gems there, and so were justice and judgment; but the combined glory was, and is, unutterable. Even angels veil their faces before the exceeding brightness: who, then, shall tell its splendor? who conceive what that throne is which is "from everlasting to everlasting," the abiding-place of the Most High?

There was a vacancy in the throne once, for the King came down to fit men to behold it in his glory, and to serve him around it. He established a gracious plan of preparation, and went back, leaving to every one a cordial invitation to come unto his royal seat, and dwell permanently with him in the full enjoyment of the peculiar blessings such a position allows. There will be no disappointment, no failure, for "the throne of God is forever and ever, and a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of his kingdom." A glorious high place is the place of God's throne, and around it congregate his servants that serve him. They may have come from lowliest spheres, but it matters not, if there be only a loyal spirit.

Dick, who wrote much of a future state, has what he calls "sublime and magnificent ideas" in connection with astronomical theories, which locate God's throne in the centre of the universe. He imagines a "grand central body," which may be considered the "capital of the universe." "From this glorious centre," he says, "embassies may be occasionally dispatched to all surrounding worlds, in every region of space. Here, too, deputations from all the different provinces of creation may occasionally assemble, and the inhabitants of different worlds mingle with each other, and learn the grand outlines of those physical operations and moral transactions which have taken place in their respective spheres. Here may be exhibited to the view of unnumbered multitudes objects of sublimity and glory, which are nowhere else to be found within the wide extent of creation. Here intelligences of the highest order,

who have attained the most sublime heights of knowledge and virtue, may form the principal part of the population of this magnificent region. Here the glorified body of the Redeemer may have taken its principal station, as 'the head of all principalities and powers;' and here, likewise, Enoch and Elijah may reside, in the mean time, in order to learn the history of the magnificent plans and operations of the Deity, that they may be enabled to communicate intelligence respecting them to their brethren of the race of Adam, when they shall again mingle with them in the world allotted for their abode, after the general resurrection. Here the grandeur of the Deity, the glory of his physical and moral perfections, and the immensity of his empire, may strike the mind with more bright effulgence, and excite more elevated emotions of admiration and rapture, than in any other province of universal nature. In fine, this vast and splendid central universe may constitute that august mansion referred to in Scripture under the designation of the third heavens, the throne of the Eternal, the high and holy place, and the light that is inaccessible and full of glory."

All this is pleasing to contemplate and delightful to anticipate; but it is the conjecture of fallible man. Possibly it may be characteristic of the throne of God, and it may be very remote from it. We know that every part of it will be glorious; but there is nothing more satisfying than to fall back upon the sure word of inspiration, respecting the Holy City: "The throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it." Wherever it be, it will exceed our highest thought, in itself and all its surroundings. Happy they who shall bow before it, to pay their homage unto Him who is upon it.

Again, it is said of heaven, "The Lamb is the light thereof." Did ever such light pervade any other place? Jesus, the Lamb, is the blissful centre of all light, and the beams that radiate from him make every object glow with surpassing lustre. Everything shines in clear transparency continually, not with lights and shades, as here, but constant shining from the Sun of all suns,

diffuses transcendent brightness through the whole heavenly sphere. "The sun," as we are wont to speak, "does not light on them, nor any heat," and yet there can be no darkness, for "the Lamb is the light thereof;" and there is no chill, for warmth is from the same source. The heavenly streets are always lighted. There are no dark avenues to be avoided. All is clearer than the clearest noonday. And who are they that shall enjoy it?

"The nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it." Behold the white-robed company in the mansions of light, treading their familiar walks, or proceeding to those less so, under the guidance of the Great Leader. To the interrogation, "Whence came ye?" they might say,

"I from Greenland's frozen land."

'I from India's sultry plain.'

'I from Afric's barren sand.'

'I from islands of the main.'

All our earthly journey past,

Every tear and pain gone by;

Here together met at last,

At the portals of the sky."

From opposite quarters of the globe, from every part of it, through much and varied tribulation, they go up to the realm of the blest, and walk in the light of it, with the grateful consciousness swelling their bosoms forevermore, that they are "saved," saved from sin, saved from a miserable doom, and from everything that in any way troubles or makes afraid. The nations of the earth have more or less that is revolting and distasteful. We have prejudices that we can scarcely overcome, and in all our intercourse they influence us. We never receive or impart without being in a measure controlled by our likes and dislikes. We may be jealous for the honor of our own nation, and condemn unsparingly what we see in another, — and in all there is more or less cause for recrimination, — but among the "nations that are saved" there will never be even ground for suspicion. They dwell in light, the children of

light, and all their actions are based upon holy and perfect principle, upon pure and all-embracing love.

They form the only perfect community we know. They have been chosen from the nations of the earth, and transplanted to a clime every way fitted for their truest and highest development, in all things that constitute virtue and goodness. They more than realize our loftiest ideals of nobility of character, for everything that mars in the slightest degree was removed before they entered the holy land. Imperfection has no place there. Whoever goes to join the nations that are redeemed in the upper world, goes to a pure, happy, and perfect community, each one of which is moved with such benevolence as to prompt a cordial reception, and a full share in all the privileges and enjoyments which they know. Every addition to their number even begets a new song, and sends a thrill of joy through every soul, for thereby their Lord and King obtains new glory and honor; and to Him who prepared the place, and brought them thither with such joys and prospects, they ever take delight in ascribing praise.

Should tidings come to us of some far-off island of the sea, wondrously fair and beautiful, with climate exceedingly fine, that is rich and fragrant with fruit and flowers, and besides all this is inhabited by a peaceable and loving people, who delight in entertaining new guests, — in showing them the beauties and giving them of the treasures of their land, — with what interest should we look upon it! How thought and desire would wing their way to such a favored spot! How many would turn their faces and their steps thitherward! The invalid would go in anticipation of new life for his decaying energies, the pleasure-loving to gratify his thirst for novelty, and the artist and man of taste to realize their idea of the beautiful. Fascination would surround the spot, and it would be celebrated in story and song. There are stories of such places, but they are fabulous, having their existence only in imagination. We know there is really nothing like this on our sin-

stained earth ; but we also know that there is a place in another world that exceeds this ideal one in every respect. It is where "the nations of them that are saved" walk ; and there is a way to reach it—"a highway ;" and those who pass over it "come with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads," to a land of perpetual joy, where "sorrow and sighing flee away."

Also, "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." The monarchs of this world are proud to embellish their royal seats ; are ambitious to gather memorials of grandeur, and perform great and heroic deeds, *that* they may get glory to their name and kingdom. Monuments, statues, libraries, everything that can contribute to renown and prosperity are secured, and a king is regarded in character and capacity according to the extent to which he hath cared for these things. A wise king will regard the interest and welfare of his subjects, and plan for their advantage ; so He who presides over the heavenly kingdom has the best and highest welfare of his subjects at heart continually, and has not neglected the gathering of things from all his universe that would in the least contribute to the happiness of his loyal and faithful ones. The preparations and improvements which he has made are indeed magnificent and royal, and all the splendor of the richest and proudest cities of time is not at all comparable with the City of God. He avails himself of every source to add unto its glory, and for this "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." Proud empires of the past, with all their grandeur and glory, have fallen, and those who founded and beautified them have also passed away ; but whoso is engaged in bringing "glory and honor" into the celestial empire will have a name written upon a more enduring monument than earth ever produced, and a memory perpetuated in the annals of heaven forever.

"The gates shall not be shut at all by day." This implies a feeling of most perfect security ; but the significance of the

idea is not to us what it was to John, or what it is to people of the East now, whose cities are encircled by walls, the gates of which are closed the greater part of the time, to the no small inconvenience of those that are within. At certain hours of the day they are closed upon the moving mass within; and be their desire ever so strong, their wants ever so pressing, they must remain in the enclosure. The restrictions of a massive wall are ever around them, but in the heavenly city "the gates shall not be shut at all by day." There is freedom there without restraint, though at the same time the holy soul will wish for no indulgence that is not perfectly reasonable and right. Curiosity will never look through the open gates with unhallowed purpose. Desire will never be roaming abroad with doubtful intent, for the inhabitants of that city are satisfied with their portion. The heavenly home is indeed "bright and fair." It is a glorious place that the Saviour has prepared for them that love Him. Precious is that which is spoken concerning it. Why are not souls more enraptured with it?

A dying girl awoke from a transient dream. "I was painting a beautiful picture of heaven," said she; and her countenance glowed with intense delight at the vision she had caught. If the vision be fair, what will the reality be? If the anticipation yield so much pleasure, what will actual possession be? Nothing but unbounded love and goodness are manifest in the provisions which God has made for his followers. If it had been the province of man, after the fall, to have framed a plan for the future home of his soul, would it have been anything like this that we have now to hope for? The highest conception of the imperfect man could never have reached it. Therefore, let the world rejoice that God took it upon himself to plan and build the New Jerusalem, the foundation and superstructure of which is surpassingly strong and beautiful. Let gratitude swell the hearts of the children of men that one so infinitely good and able has undertaken to furnish and people it; that he has sent forth his invitation, saying, Come, dwell

in my city, and be at rest; come, share in the blessings I am prepared to bestow.

“ Loud let his praises ring;
Praise, praise for aye,”

because of the glory revealed — the heaven offered.

Tantalus saw a good that he thirsted for continually, but could never reach it; so heaven might be very fair and beautiful in our eyes, while our spirits were pining in the vain effort to attain it. We might be justly tantalized in this way; but God, who is “rich in mercy,” has been pleased to make the priceless good attainable, and open a way by which all that will may have part in the purchased possession — the rich inheritance.

Heaven is open to receive all that come in this appointed way, and their names will be registered in the “book of life,” to remain forever. Saint and angel bands stand waiting to receive the newly-arrived, and conduct them to places where are “fulness of joy” and “pleasures forevermore;” where

“ The river of life, in many a winding maze,
Descending from the lofty throne of God,”

with “excessive glory” crowns the scene.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OCCUPATIONS OF THE BLEST.

*Eternal Life a Continuation of this. — Future physical Economy unknown.
— Activity a Law of all Being. — Memory survives. — Study of Science.
— Redeeming Love the grand Theme. — Praise. — Cultivation of Vir-
tue. — Heaven a glad Surprise.*

“Whate’er the spirits blest pursue,
Where’er they go, whatever sights they see
Of glory and bliss through all the tracts of heaven,
The centre still, the figure eminent,
Whither they ever turn, on whom all eyes
Repose with infinite delight, is God,
And his incarnate Son, the Lamb once slain
On Calvary, to ransom ruined men.” — *Pollok.*

THE germ of the future life is hidden in that of the present, and all unfoldings of it here will be the enhancement of its strength, beauty, and sweetness in the day of final perfection hereafter. All that we can attain unto here, notwithstanding all our artificial forces, is, as it were, a feeble bud, that refuses to open and display its inner character. Life blossoms only under the genial influences of heaven. Its petals fully expand only in the favoring air of the upper sphere, and the richness of the tinting they receive there surpasses the power of the imagination to conceive.

The full and perfect rose of to-day was but a tiny bud a short time since, apparently of no such capacity as is now evident. The unfolding has revealed its interior life, and presented an aspect of which we might never have dreamed, had we not seen it; but we fail not to recognize the relation

between the bud and the flower. The same principle is manifest through formation and development; and somewhat like unto this is the life of man. Redeemed saints, who now walk the heavenly vales, were a short time since encircled by bands they could not break. On either side was a covering they could not burst, and it concealed beauty and power that they themselves did not know they possessed. The parted folds may, indeed, have disclosed richness of coloring, or that which betokened it; but the breadth of expansion of which they were capable was all unknown.

The life they now live is only the continuation, the development of that life which was begun on earth. The successive stages of the embryotic state were all necessary, and had each their interesting phases; but in none was it imagined what the perfected glory would be. They see the once feeble germ spreading itself, and becoming constantly more perfect. Life is on a higher plane. The position is elevated, and the soul looks out from a different stand-point. They could never before understand the interior life of the saints. Conception and perception are now faculties vastly unlike those they knew below, and their purity, quickness, and intensity have been given for the appreciation and enjoyment of everything in their new life. Bands and coverings are broken and burst, and they have emerged exultingly into a free and joyous existence, too broad and high to be comprehended, except with new vision and divinely imparted power for this very purpose. They have all that is necessary to secure adaptation to the world into which they have been ushered, to the things by which they are surrounded, and the society of which they form a part. When they chose Christ for their portion upon earth, then were incorporated into their souls these elements of a heavenly life; and through reliance upon unfailing promises, they were permitted earnestness and foretastes of rich joy that God would reveal in his good time; but there was something in that joy they could not know while encompassed by mortality.

They did not understand it, until, clothed with the righteousness of their Lord, they entered in through the gates of the Celestial City, and heard the pledge, From this sinless place ye shall go no more out forever. We may hear much of a certain place—of its loveliness, the beauty of its natural scenery; but not until we have seen it have we true and definite ideas of it. To fully appreciate anything, we must see it. To sympathize with one in any given direction, we must have experimental knowledge in that particular, or we sensibly fail in reaching his case: hence the expressions, To be realized, it must be seen; To be known fully, it must be felt. So heaven cannot be fully understood by mortals. They have yet to burst the chrysalis of being, and rise, before they can know what is above. They are in their earthly prison-house, and cannot know fully the freedom of that life which is beyond. God never intended his children should understand heaven in all its aspects until they should be called to a permanent residence there; and even then, such are its exhaustless wonders, there will be no time in the history of their limitless being when they will have seen all there is to be seen, or know all there is to be known. The divine Saviour has "secret counsels" in these things; and who does not rejoice in this? for who would know the whole on earth? How it would detract from heaven if we could comprehend it now! It would, as it were, destroy it, for it would be a creation of our own, instead of a glorious idea of the Good and the Great, taking upon itself a form of inconceivable beauty, that we are conscious, in the depth of our souls, requires a new phase of being altogether, before it can be seen and known. This invests it with a glory and grandeur that we feel appropriately belongs to it; and we are constrained to say, Better is the Heaven of our God than the loftiest Paradise of our thoughts. We are told that it is beautiful and glorious; that it has in reserve rich rewards; that it offers every possible inducement for the way-worn pilgrims of earth to seek it; but we can never know what these things

are, perfectly, until we get there. A wealthy individual might give us a cordial invitation to his house, and bid us reap all its pleasures and advantages; and though a single characteristic of these were never mentioned, should we not regard ourselves as honored, and particularly fortunate? Jesus invites us to his Father's house, bids us roam at will among its untold pleasures, and avail ourselves of its numberless advantages; but could we expect him to reveal the occupations of eternity in any considerable degree? Some features of heavenly employments are revealed, but they are only indications, yet blessed ones. Mortals, however, are not satisfied with these; they would assure themselves of the secret mysteries of another life, and know, before they are "clothed upon," what God would not have them know until death lifts the veil. "We cannot be surprised," says a modern writer, "that all men are moved, at times, with an intense desire to penetrate the secret of the future life. It is a most natural, and, if restrained within reverential limits, a most pardonable curiosity. It is more than curiosity; it is a rational interest. At times we cannot repress the exclamation, How wonderful, that God should have persisted so calmly, so silently, so completely, to preserve his secret for these six thousand years!

"Of many things which respect the conditions and occupations of the heavenly world, God has made revelation to us; our future physical economy is his secret. The things revealed are at once perceived to have a close and most practical relation to our improvement and to our happiness, both for the present and for the future. The things concealed are as obviously not indispensable either to improvement or happiness. My own persuasion is, in the first place, that, as we are now organized, we are not receptive of ideas of our future physical economy; and in the second place, that, were we so receptive, the felicity of that economy is so great, that a revelation of its characteristics would make us utterly impatient of the inaccuracy,

feebleness, and uncertainty of the economy we are for the present required to endure and complete."

The material and the spiritual are to be glorified, and the occupations we shall know in such a state cannot be made intelligible to such creatures as we really are now. Doubtless we shall be employed, in countless ways, upon objects that as yet we have not the slightest knowledge of; but they will all derive their interest as related to one end, and that end the glory of Him who redeemed us, and washed us in his own blood, thereby fitting us for the holy work.

One thing we are warranted in believing — that the future will involve the highest activity of all our powers. Activity is a law of spiritual not less than of natural life. God is unceasingly active, and he subjects his followers to the same condition. It was appointed to the first pair in sinless Eden, for their happiness could not be complete without it. The soul was made for action, and demands it. Without it, it contracts, languishes, and falls low in the scale, whereas it should, by the due observance of the laws of its being, be constantly in the ascending direction. All noble and aspiring minds are distinguished by their measure of action, and all worthy achievement in the world is based upon it. The forces of nature must be active, or serious disturbance, if not death, is the consequence. To be an idler is to take an unworthy place in this busy economy which God has instituted. "It is repugnant to all the laws of the hidden life. Goodness finds its emblem, not in the pool, but in the stream. Run it must, or it cannot live."

Action is God-like. It created the world; it benefits and saves it; and a place without it, where there is no necessity for it, is not after the model we would suppose or wish. The Roman nation would not permit the Goddess of Rest a place within the gates of their city, and the temple of Quies arose without the enclosure, while Stimula and Strenua, patrons of constancy and diligence, found their royal seats in more favored places. The acknowledged life of the nation was activity,

among a heathen people, and not less is it the motive power of Christianity. Everywhere it is life, and its absence death. It is made essential in all God's universe, and holy effort we conclude to be indispensable to the bliss of heaven. A world where there is nothing to do would not be heaven, and there are few who do not feel that there is real bliss in action. Let an ambitious spirit, that is bounded by the narrow capacity of an enfeebled system, have restored to it the power to will and do, and it is happy. It is in its element. There is no charm, but rather the wretched reverse, in being compelled to inaction. So the saint is not happy without being employed. Employment is essential to vigorous life in the sphere where he is, and he would not be deprived of it. It is joy to go on errands of love, at the call of his beloved Lord, though it be to remotest points, if so be that good may be accomplished. Holiest plans will be wrought out through eternity by the redeemed, and variety of pursuit will afford satisfaction to those of every taste. To please God will be the aim of all; but it is not to be denied that there will be different tastes there, and different degrees of fitness for special objects, so that while one is commissioned to the performance of one thing, another may go on a higher embassy, and so on in endless gradation, and yet the existing order and harmony be such, that not so much as a single spark of envy will be excited. Love is inwrought into the constitution of the soul, and, therefore, will survive all the changes which death will bring. If one has been devoted to an innocent and laudable object of pursuit in this life, if for a long series of years his heart has been enlisted, his affections bestowed upon this chosen thing, and even up to the last moment of existence upon earth, will there be no trace of that love in heaven? To deny it would be to say that an inherent quality of the soul will be destroyed; and if one, why not the others? and how, then, is the soul immortal? The faculties of the soul, we must believe, will go through the process of dissolving nature unimpaired. Memory will live, and the redeemed saints cannot but look back over all

the way the Lord has led them since he gave them being, and wonder at the signal displays of mercy which they never saw so clearly before. This will constitute an element in heavenly bliss. Memory will open the book of the past, and upon every page will read of providence and grace with new and ever-increasing interest, for gratitude will be constantly heightened by the ever-recurring consciousness in the soul that it has been brought safely, through all, into the blessed land. Those familiar with the dream of Dr. Doddridge will remember this to have been a pleasing feature in the happiness which he imagined had come to his soul. The walls of his mansion held the pictures of his life, and there before him he beheld, in rich display, the divine goodness hovering over him, crowning his days with mercy, and shielding him in times of danger and temptation. Their study produced a thrill of ineffable joy, and he fell in grateful admiration at the feet of his Lord. This is an experience of dream-land; but may it not be considered an adumbration of the real land, that is to open upon all believers? Watts recognized the truth when his fervid spirit dwelt upon the time when he should sit upon the flowery slopes of heaven, and "recount the labor" of his feet with "transporting joy." Remembrance of this sinful and imperfect life, it may be said, is calculated to excite unpleasant emotion, since the record is stained with numerous paragraphs that we love not to look upon; but all sin is forgiven and removed, and it surely cannot but swell adoration because of the matchless love which gave the final victory. The sinless condition of the blessed may be appreciated all the better by their recollection of the past, when they groaned under the dominion of sin. Christ taught that the memory of the lost is not destroyed. It formed a bitter ingredient in the cup of the "rich man;" it greatly aggravated his misery to think of what he had slighted and lost forever.

The same is equally true of the saved. Doubtless they will retain a distinct recollection of their earthly career through all the cycles of the endless state. As they look back to the time when

they were led by the Divine Spirit to choose whom they would serve, and to the period when upon God's altar the sacrifice was laid, will not their song be sweeter and more loud because of the grace which thus distinguished and inclined them? When they review the glad day in which they stood up for Jesus in the great congregation, confessing to the world a willingness "to suffer reproach with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," — when they think of the delight they have known in the communion of saints around the sacramental board, and of sacred moments when the love of Jesus joyfully constrained them, — they can but be stirred to fresh anthems of praise.

The same will be likewise true as they look back and discover the gentle promptings which inclined them to deeds of benevolence, to self-denial for the good of others. These things are rewarded in heaven, yea, even the presenting of a "cup of cold water;" and, in receiving the recompense, it were strange if memory should be faithless to her trust, and have no knowledge of the kindly acts. The significance of reward would thus be in a great measure lost.

We know the remembrance of a danger past is attended with peculiarly grateful feelings, and that returning vigor and elasticity of health, after painful and protracted sickness, are prized chiefly by contrast; and so will the memory of the past, the dangers, sorrows, and temptations of time, enhance the joy of the securely blest in the world above.

If memory and love thus survive the tomb, it follows, then, that, to some extent, they will have a determining influence upon pursuits of the redeemed.

The imagination of a poet, while musing upon the heavenly world, has there beheld bands of kindred spirits united in the pursuit of those things they loved and sought while they walked on earth; groups of artists, who "hold the pencil," realizing the ideal which their minds so long sought below, but could not find, perchance revealing to each other some loved scene with

dearest imagery, that had some influence in subduing and chastening the naturally proud spirit, fitting it for the home and the scenes to which they had been brought; or,

“gazing on the scenery of heaven,
They dip their hand in color’s native well,
And on the everlasting canvas dash
Figures of glory, imagery divine,
With grace and grandeur in perfection knit.”

God has manifested a high regard for the beautiful in the creation of this world, and he did not take it away when those to whom he gave it proved false; and we may well conclude that if he does so much for the imperfect, he will do infinitely more for those whom he has made perfect. In the place which he has prepared for them, there will doubtless be ample scope for the lovers of art. They will feast their eyes upon the loveliest and most perfect models, new beauties displaying themselves the longer they gaze, filling their hearts with deepest appreciation, and lighting their countenances with holy radiance, all indicative of divinest joy.

Those, too, whose chief delight has been in poesy and song will find abundant and diversified material for loftiest poems; and all thought will be in harmonious measure, evolving only the most melodious sounds. The eye and the ear will be so sweetly regaled with all that is beautiful and musical, that the soul will breathe itself out in most delightful song. The anthems which they hear chanted by saints and angels about them will fill them with holy ecstasy, and inspire them to new productions breathing the same spirit. Milton, Cowper, with their companions who spoke in sacred verse, have long since found themselves at a more grateful fountain than that of Castalian inspiration. In the Paradise gained, the glorious strains of the “new song” are forever filling their souls with gladness. Their hearts were full of melody and rhythm in their earthly existence, but they now participate in the

symphonies of heaven through an endless life. In the songs of the grand and universal celebration they have part, the while touching with skilful hand the ever-tuneful harp, that produces richer music than all the combined instruments of earth. Never were such rich strains as those in the verse of heaven, for they were dictated by Jesus himself for his own choir, and they are surpassingly sweet.

Thus we imagine full satisfaction for the varied tastes of all those who pass into the New Jerusalem. What they have loved wisely here, they will love better there, and what they have sought here, agreeably to the divine will, they will enjoy there with keener relish. They shall be fully satisfied, is the assurance that God always bade his messengers give his people; and if they enter heaven with one bias of soul stronger than another, it shall be allowed its gratification. They will indeed love that which is assigned them; but He who portions their lot will have respect unto their preference and capacity. The poet continues, —

“Behold another band . . .
Of piercing, steady, intellectual eye,
And spacious forehead of sublimest thought.
They reason deep of present, future, past,
And trace effect to cause, and meditate
On the eternal laws of God.”

Reason is God-like. It allies man to the Infinite as nothing else does. It is that which distinguishes man from the lower orders of creation, and continually elevates him in the scale of being. It is the prime ornament and regulator of mind, making it like unto a mint, from which the most valuable coin is issued, which circulates through and blesses the world. This, too, shall survive the tomb. It is never so clear and bright as oftentimes in the last moment of expiring nature; therefore we conclude the mind retains this attribute, and goes with it into the other world, where it will do its work more fitly than here. There will be reasoning in heaven; and what

glorious subjects for the exercise of this faculty will be spread out there ! They who dwell there will

“dip into the deep, original,
Unknown, mysterious elements of things,”

with wonderful interest, while every step in the process will reveal new traces of the beauty, power, and skill of the great Author of all.

They will revolve “cause and effect” in connection with redeeming love ; and, though they continually turn over the “secret leaves of man’s redemption,” the problem is so mighty it will occupy their minds through endless ages.

They may ponder, work, and measure still, and yet never know fully the height and depth of its marvellous grace. There will always be new mysteries for the most sagacious reasoner, limitless scope for study for the pupils in the heavenly school, and they will never learn all, neither weary of poring over the divine revelations. They will delight in the acquisition of all knowledge, at least of all such as their Divine Teacher permits ; and this, doubtless, will form a part of the employment of the heavenly world. Then those who have loved to gather in the temples of learning, those whose favorite haunts have been the halls of science, will find themselves in full possession of more than coveted advantages for the prosecution of that which they have so ardently desired, and which they can vastly better comprehend. There are no friction, no disturbing forces there, and no painful sense of failure in the attempt to grasp subjects deep and high. There have been men on earth with a marvellous power of concentrated thought, who have wrought out principles from solid material, as the sculptor has carved a finished statue from a block of marble ; but they have done it at such a vast expense of their physical strength that they have become unfit for further achievement. In some instances mind has, in consequence of such application, lost its power to perceive and retain, and the world has wept over a sad though splendid ruin.

There will be nothing of this among those who study in heaven. The enlarged mental powers will be able to bring into desirable proximity all ideas related to the subjects of meditation, thus giving ready comprehension of truth, and its associate result. As by intuition, things will be understood that life-long effort has failed to reach. O, what a mind the saint of a thousand years must possess ! But there are no years in the calendar of the saints ; countless periods witness the growth and perfection of the mental nature, until it shall stand in glorious and lordly stature like the tall archangel, to the praise of the Infinite, to whom all tends, and in whom all is lost.

What mighty intellects will appear in the lapse of ages ! There will be perception of new truths continually ; for truth lives and thrives in the heavenly sphere. It is its congenial clime, and reaches perfection there. From its nature, it is eternal and unchangeable ; and, consequently, we suppose its study to be the basis of reasoning and of action in the future state of the blest. It is called the only "lasting treasure ;" and surely it must sparkle and shine as crystal drops from the "water of life" trickle over it, preserving it from all impurity, and preventing the accretion of all foreign and adventitious matter. It will not be the laborious task of searching for diamond truths among a mass of useless rubbish, but they will at once appear, pure and unalloyed, in setting of exquisite and glorious design. The crust of error is left outside the walls of heaven, and within every thing is polished and clear, especially the gem of truth that adorns the bosom of the saints. This will engage attention and enlist admiration forever.

From these considerations an argument is adduced in favor of scientific investigation in the future — that science, which embodies truth, will be pursued when we have left the earth, and entered upon our eternal condition and employments.

The faculties which aid man in knowledge and discovery were implanted in his constitution by God himself, "and the objects on which these faculties are exercised, are the works of

the Creator, which, the more minutely they are investigated, the more strikingly do they display the glory of his character and perfections. Consequently, it must have been the intention of the Creator that man should employ the powers he has given him in scientific researches, otherwise he would never have endowed him with such noble faculties, nor have opened to his view so large a portion of his empire. Scientific investigations, therefore, are to be considered as nothing less than inquiries into the plans and operations of the Eternal, in order to unfold the attributes of his nature, his providential procedure in the government of his creatures, and the laws by which he directs the movements of universal nature."

These things will elicit the warmest interest of God's people when he takes them to himself, and gives them a power increasingly perceptive and receptive. Whatever concerns the glory of God in any way, will be a matter of profoundest import; for the grand motive power will be love, and the highest bliss will be to discover new methods of its enhancement.

In men of this world, devotion to science oftentimes strangely blinds the mind, so that the true aim is lost; but those who pursue it in the upper world will lose nothing of the highest wisdom that can be gained from it. And why? Because the purified vision of the saints will distinguish more clearly, and their purified powers will comprehend more quickly and entirely.

There will be no selfish end to be accomplished, no narrow-minded policy for the attainment of honorable position, nor anything of the kind; but only the acquisition of good for its own sake, and the sake of Him whose bright creation it is.

The well-known "Christian philosopher" has gone so far as to enumerate studies which he thinks will find a place in God's school hereafter. We briefly notice these, with some of the reasons, which, in his estimation, warrant such a belief.

Without the science of numbers, in their various powers and combinations, no extensive progress could be made among

intelligent beings anywhere. Its fixed and unalterable principles are absolutely indispensable to all worthy and rational calculation, and to the arrival of just conceptions with regard to the commonest things of life, as well as the ways and works of God in his universe.

The stupendous magnitudes of the heavenly bodies which fill the ethereal realm, would be all unknown to us without this science. They might stud the mighty concave as now; but instead of the magnificent ideas which now fill our minds, and enlarge the boundary of elevated thought, there would be the simple and meagre knowledge that they exist. Their size, distance, and relation to each other could not be ascertained. What should we know of the immense radiations of light that are emitted from the sun, and travel with inconceivable rapidity in their journey to our globe, and of countless other and most interesting things? .

The present perfection of the science has revealed wonderful facts, and led man to exclaim, in the conscious littleness of his soul, "How great a God is our God!" "His ways are past finding out." It might be reasonably concluded, that if it be the pleasure of the Almighty to show so much here, he will show much more in the good time that is to come; that if he permits such revelations of his power now, he will multiply them hereafter.

The process of study will indeed involve nothing of present tediousness and labor. It will not be the sitting down to a difficult problem, that must be wrought out by slow and uncertain steps; but, in all probability, mind will act with such quickness and rapidity, and, withal, so surely, that, in itself, it would arrive at results with speedy and unerring certainty. Bible allusions to numbers are also taken as indications that beings of superior intelligence are not unmindful of the science, and not uninterested in it, as signified by the "thousand thousands," and "ten thousand times ten thousand," that take their part in God's service before his throne. "These expressions

are the strongest which the inspired writers make use of, in order to express a countless multitude of objects; and they lead us to conclude that, in the heavenly world, vast assemblages of intelligent beings will be occasionally presented to the view; and, consequently, a countless variety of scenes, objects, and circumstances connected with their persons, stations, and employments. And, therefore, if celestial beings were not familiarized with numerical calculations and proportions, such scenes, instead of being contemplated with intelligence and rational admiration, would confound the intellect, and produce an effect similar to that which is felt by a savage when he beholds, for the first time, some of the splendid scenes of civilized life."

Astronomy, too, with its wonderful and sublime revelations, will continue to enlarge the conceptions and expand the intellect in the other world. The heavens are supposed to constitute the principal part of God's universal empire, and it is an exceedingly small part of it that we can comprehend with our finite knowledge, even with all the aid man can summon. Our views are limited and circumscribed, and the subject is grand and inexhaustible, affording peculiar and rich displays of divine power and skill; and if mankind, when placed in a higher sphere of existence, have not the means of prosecuting this study, then, so far, will they be less favored than they were upon earth. The grand aim of all in the celestial state will be to increase in the love and knowledge of the infinite God; and in proportion as the boundary of his empire is known and appreciated, will praise and adoration abound.

The extent, order, and harmony of systems, suns, and planets, as they are contemplated, must excite devout recognition of the power of a guiding hand, that is matchless in ability, and awake corresponding strains of sublime song.

The science which has for its object the promotion of acquaintance with the phenomena of the material world, the explanation of their causes, and the investigation of the laws

by which the Almighty works in the operations of nature, is also a matter which shall claim the attention of the renovated inhabitants of the upper spheres.

Natural philosophy may be considered a branch of the religion of nature, and of the religion of revelation. It removes, in part, the veil which is spread over the mysterious processes of nature, and discloses to our view the wonders which lie concealed from the thoughtless multitude, "who regard not the works of the Lord, nor consider the operations of his hands." It enables us to perceive the footsteps of the Almighty, both in his majestic movements, and in his most minute designs; for there is not a step we can take in the temple of nature, under the guidance of an enlightened philosophy, in which we do not behold traces of inscrutable wisdom, and of a benevolence which extends its kind regards to every rank of sensitive and intelligent existence. It shows us the beauty and goodness of the divine administration, and demonstrates that the communication of happiness is the final cause of all the admirable arrangements in the material system. It teaches us that all the movements of nature are effected by means uncontrollable by human power, and far transcending finite skill to plan or execute. It discovers those laws by which the Sovereign of the universe governs his vast dominions, and maintains them in undecaying beauty and splendor throughout all ages. It thus enables us to regard the universe as one grand temple; and, by the contemplation of every object it presents, to elevate our minds, and to raise our voices in grateful praises to Him "who created all things, and for whose pleasure they are and were created."

Such an end harmonizes with the will of saints, who delight in nothing so much as in learning of God; and the supposition is warrantable that they will not only retain their interest, but find it vastly increased as to the application of philosophical principles to the wants and happiness of mankind. True, what connection saints will have with the material world, — if

any, of what nature, we cannot tell. All is shrouded in mystery with reference to the scene into which they have been ushered. We cannot know all their manner of life, nor is it necessary that we should; but the works and ways of God will doubtless challenge thought and admiration among them, and to further this end, History may add her quota of interest and advantage. The eye of the Omniscient looks down with deepest solicitude upon the moral history of the world. It is a record of human character and passion; of human will and depravity, or of rightful conflicts and triumphs of good; and in proportion to the extent of the latter will be the satisfaction of the redeemed. Upon its pages are spread, in detail, God's providential dealings with those he has placed upon earth, and a witness to the rectitude of his character and the equity of his administration.

The unfolding of the scroll of history will display great events and great victories, that have told powerfully upon the human race; and as it is presented to the consideration of the redeemed, it must surely magnify the mercy and forbearance of the Lord, which he has exercised toward a wayward and sinning people. "But the history of man," it is said, "is not the only topic in this department of knowledge that will occupy the attention of the inhabitants of heaven. The history of angels — of their faculties, intercourses, and employments; of their modes of communication with each other, of their different embassies to distant worlds, of the transactions which have taken place in their society, and of the revolutions through which they may have passed; the history of apostate angels — the cause of their fall, and the circumstances with which it was attended, the plans they have been pursuing since that period, and the means by which they have endeavored to accomplish their infernal devices, — will doubtless form a portion of the history of Divine dispensations, which the "saints in light" will be permitted to contemplate.

Over this part of the divine economy a veil of darkness is

spread, which, we have reason to believe, will be withdrawn when that which is perfect is come, and when "we shall know, even as also we are known." It is also probable that the leading facts in relation to the history of other worlds will be disclosed to their view. The history of the different planets in the solar system, and of those which are connected with other systems in the universe, — the periods of their creation, the character of their inhabitants, the changes through which they have passed, the peculiar dispensations of Providence toward them, and many other particulars, may be gradually laid open to the "redeemed from among men." By means of such communications they will acquire a clearer and more distinct conception of the moral character and attributes of God, of the rectitude of his administrations, and of "his manifold wisdom" in the various modes by which he governs the different provinces of his vast empire. Under the impressions which such views will produce, they will rejoice in the divine government, and join with rapture in the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!"

Thus are these things considered as belonging to the employment of the saints; as among the things that delight and improve them in their holy life. Besides these there is the idea of being fed by the "Lamb in the midst of the throne," which the same writer imagines to be realized in the form of "lectures," which may convey to the blessed the most transporting knowledge of different portions of the universe, thus revealing plans and operations calculated to awaken the most exalted reverence and devotion.

"Perhaps," he says, "it may not be beyond the bounds of probability to suppose, that at certain seasons, during a grand convocation of the redeemed, with Jesus, their exalted Head president among them, that glorious personage may impart to them knowledge of the most exalted kind, direct their views to

some bright manifestations of Deity, and deliver most interesting lectures on the works and ways of God. This would be quite accordant with his office as the 'Mediator between God and man,' and to his character as 'Messenger of Jehovah,' and the 'Revealer' of the divine dispensations."

A similar opinion was entertained by Dr. Watts, who, in dwelling upon the same subject, thus declared himself: "Perhaps you will suppose there is no such service as hearing sermons, that there is no attendance upon the word of God there. But are we sure there are no such entertainments? Are there no lectures of divine wisdom and grace given to the younger spirits there, by spirits of a more exalted station? Or, may not our Lord Jesus Christ himself be the everlasting Teacher of his church? May he not at solemn seasons summon all heaven to hear him publish some new and surprising discoveries, which have never yet been made known to the ages of nature and of grace, and are reserved to entertain the attention and to exalt the pleasure of spirits advanced to glory? Must we learn all by the mere contemplation of Christ's person? Does he never make use of speech, to the instruction and joy of saints above? Or, it may be, that our blessed Lord (even as he is man) has some noble and unknown way of communicating a long discourse, or a long train of ideas and discoveries, to millions of blessed spirits at once, without the formalities of voice and language; and at some peculiar seasons he may thus instruct and delight his saints in heaven."

However pleasant this may be to our present conceptions, it is not to be denied that it takes much of its coloring from earthly mixtures. Imagination may seek to penetrate the unseen and unknown, but it must ever fall back into the shadows of improbability with broken wing and helpless form. It may flutter and beat about, but it cannot rise into the inaccessible glory, the celestial sunlight, until it shall experience the full vigor of complete renovation. There is no basis for the inquiring soul more substantial than the simple, inspired declaration, "I shall be

satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." This is a firm foundation that cannot be removed. It may, indeed, be that all these characteristics will exist, that study will be thus prosecuted, that these modes of communication will be used. We are, at least, prepared for the idea of an ever-increasing expansion of intellect; of a limitless capacity and transcendent advantages for the acquisition of knowledge. "We shall know," is the affirmation of the apostle; and do we not invest this with a peculiar significance? But shall we be absorbed in individual improvement? Ah, no! They live not for self there. Benevolence gushes like a mighty stream through the heavenly host. They have partaken of "the gracious amplitude of divine benefits," and are henceforth endued with a universal desire to promote goodness and happiness. Whether the theatre of this world be at all the sphere of this activity, we do not certainly know. Whether they are permitted to come back and silently minister unto those they have loved, is something of which we cannot perfectly assure ourselves. It is exceedingly pleasant to cherish this idea, to think they still hover over us with watchful interest, guiding and sweetly inspiring holy emotion, preserving still a delightful bond of sympathy, while with uplifted finger they constantly point to the skies, to allure us upward to the regions they have found so pleasant. There are reasons to favor the impression. How can the saint, dwelling securely in his heavenly home, with the remembrance of the earthly, with its clustering loves and affections, forbear reverting with fond interest to those things — those spirits with whom joys and sorrows were mingled on the way to Canaan?

Have there not been instances of the dying, with clarified vision, rejoicing in the recognition of a loved one that has come to be their convoy to the world of spirits? Are there not times in the history of the bereaved, when the departed seem round about them, almost, as it were, a living presence? And these are seasons when such ripen fast in the Christian graces, when they breathe the air of heaven, and imbibe its spirit. We would, by

no means, be unmindful, first of all, to recognize the gentle influences of the divine Spirit, which the heavenly Teacher is pleased to graciously vouchsafe unto his believing children, but it may not be foreign to his economy to employ the departed ones whom they have loved and mourned, to perfect them in Christian virtue and excellence, in meetness for the blessed life of the saints. If this be so, so far from it being a calamity to have our Christian friends removed from us, it is in reality a means of unspeakable good to our souls; the opening of an avenue through which it comes direct from the spirit-land. They become the dispensers of heaven's gifts — the almoners of its bounty, subject indeed to their divine Employer — the benevolent Jesus. We can but think that in some form or other the dwellers in heavenly vales will be employed in doing good. Jesus was a holy being upon earth; he came and exemplified perfect virtue; and from his life, it may be, we may argue something with reference to the life of those he fitted by his mission for a pure sphere, and whom he has translated thither. He was incessantly active, and his activity was turned in the channel of holy benevolence at all times. "He went about doing good," relieving every form of suffering, teaching the teachable, comforting the sorrowful, cheering the penitent, and blessing the meek and lowly. This manifestation of unexampled benevolence reveals a heart of infinite tenderness and compassion; and this is as an essential part of his nature now that he has "ascended up on high and led captivity captive," as when he lingered with suffering humanity below, and this sympathy will doubtless be one thing that he will bestow upon the redeemed. True, there will be no sin, pain, or suffering in heaven, and no room for a work like unto Christ's earthly work, but heavenly occupation will be the embodiment of Christ-like principles, though we may not comprehend the manner now. God's nature is love, and through all eternity he will remain the same and unchangeable, and that which prompted the sacrifice for man's recovery and final salvation, will continually and forever find

new occasions for its exercise. Under such tuition and discipline will the saints be perfected in the same attribute. Their occupations will be such as love suggests, and they will all be performed in the same spirit. The law of heaven will be emphatically the law of kindness, and it is not impossible that it will create a ladder reaching from heaven to earth, upon which "light winged seraphs" descend on embassies of mercy to human subjects, and ascend with joyful records of souls triumphing over sin, and becoming established in grace and godliness — intelligence that causes a general thrill of joy through all the celestial empire. We know "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," and it proves the sympathy that exists among the lovers of Jesus, both in heaven and on earth. The true church is the same, whether militant or triumphant, and eventually it will be gathered into one place, under the immediate guardianship of the Great Shepherd, there to belong to one fold, to know and follow the divine voice which they have obeyed in coming out from one world into the green pastures of a better. They will then assuredly find appropriate employment, and with all the powers of a pure and renovated nature, delight to engage in it.

"One of the employments of heaven," says one, "will unquestionably be to endeavor to measure the self-denial of the Son of God." What a study is this? To look at the motives which influenced him to resign the glories of his Father's throne, and come to earth in such a way, and live such a life, and die such a death, for such a purpose, must inspire emotions that our dull natures know nothing of now while looking "through the glass darkly." Every glance will discover more of the fulness, freeness, and richness of the mighty love; of the boundless, matchless grace which wrought out and executed the mysterious and wonderful plan of redemption for a lost world. Praise must certainly be a prominent idea with the saints, — those who have shared so richly in the results of Calvary's cross. Redeeming love must always be the absorb

ing theme — the thought, the feeling that underlies all others — the fountain from whence issues all other streams.

Ever, as the blessed consciousness of present position fills their minds, they must be compelled to say, —

“ ’Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced me in,
Else I had still refused to taste,
And perished in my sin; ” —

and the reflection must spend itself in a louder note of praise — a better offering at the feet of the Lamb who bore their sin, and carried their sorrow; who bought and sprinkled them with his own blood. The heavenly courts will resound with anthems of praise from these blood-bought ones forever. It will be a delightful occupation — the free outpouring of the whole being to Him who has washed, redeemed, and safely gathered them into so goodly a heritage. There will be perfect union between Christ and his people — perfect sympathy, so that it will be counted the highest honor and joy to coöperate with him in every plan. “Eternity will be too short,” said an eminent and youthful Christian, who was almost overwhelmed with a sense of the all-sufficiency of God’s free grace, “to speak the praises of God.”

“I cannot praise Jesus half enough,” said a little heathen girl in her simplicity, “my tongue is too short;” but all tongues will be loosed in heaven, and there will be full liberty as well as power to shout the praises of the Redeemer. If these moments are so sweet upon earth, when the spirit of heavenly worship is caught, and the soul is borne exultingly aloft, what must it be to stand where praise is the natural and unceasing flow, the spontaneous and abiding condition? New and countless influences will continually inspire it. “There rise, without distraction or division, the united devotions of myriads of pure and fervent hearts. There mingle the grateful songs of an almost infinite number of ransomed spirits, all infinitely blest. They worship without distinction, and are happy without end.”

Surely this is a delightful feature of heavenly employment. Praise is highly significant of pleasure and approbation in its application to our friends here, or to any condition or circumstance. It implies appreciation, a satisfaction with persons and things; but we know that its highest exercise here is not at all commensurate with that which is known and felt by those around the throne in the blissful sphere of the saints. It is grateful incense there, and it is never perfectly pure until it is chanted by the redeemed.

All heavenly employments, of whatever character, infinitely transcend in interest and benefit any that are known in these sublunary regions. They may, and doubtless will, have these elements of which we have spoken, but, in proportion so magnificently glorious that the realization will scarce bear any relation to the puny ideas, yet joyous ones, entertained upon earth. We know that mind and character will be eternally progressing in knowledge and holiness, and in exact ratio with the expansion will be the means for further development; that the virtues and graces which so adorn men will be cultivated, and brought to beautiful perfection, yielding blossoms of rarest loveliness, that will fill the blest abode with sweetest fragrance.

Thus the cultivation of moral and spiritual excellence is evidently one of the heavenly employments. In its own congenial soil, in the presence of Him who was its living embodiment, the saints will reproduce that which will bear some divine resemblance to the original. Every step of advancement will be a triumph that will be celebrated with song, and the exhibition of victorious palms. There will be no lack of employment, no failure in it, however stupendous the enterprise that claims engagement; for He who gives the commission also gives adequate skill and the requisite power for perfect execution.

There are spirits in this world with holy and benevolent inclination, that prompts them to the bestowment of good continually in some form or other, their highest joy being

the dissemination of truth, but who, nevertheless, by reason of circumstances, prejudice, or some other obstacles, are able to accomplish but little, at least in comparison with desire. How attractive to such must be the enterprises of the heavenly world, that are never attended with any loss ! The pledge is, "It shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Believer in Jesus, "know thy full salvation ;" think of what awaits thee when thou shalt be eternally employed in the pure service of thy most gracious Lord ; think what it will be when a desire swells thy bosom to do something for thy Redeemer, to be able to haste to its performance with not a hinderance from within or without, and with the full assurance of success. Returning with the offering to lay at his feet, the sensations of delight that then thrill thy being will whisper unutterable things of the blessedness of the life thou art living, and that is yet to be lived. There will be no temptation, no sinful suggestion attending it, but only the pure oblation from a pure heart ; and this is a precious thought, indeed, for the best service here is not unmixed with sin and selfishness.

Of course, such a condition must be one of unmingled happiness. It cannot be otherwise. There is the presence of everything that tends to promote it, and the absence of all things that in any way tend to mar it.

O, how much the Christian has to hope for, how much to anticipate !

"To be ever advancing nearer and nearer to the nature of our Great Master, though we can never reach it, — to gaze ever closer and closer on those glorious and lovely qualities of which we can never understand the full perfection, — to advance ever farther and farther into the inexhaustible treasury of the knowledge of God's mighty works — seems one of the sublimest and most interesting and most encouraging, and at the same time one of the most rational expectations that a zealous Christian can form respecting the blissful state pre-

pared for him." And how much is implied in this preparation !

A young man, in affluent circumstances, was in possession of the hand and heart of a lady whose only fortune was the graces of an affectionate spirit, and these she had cheerfully tendered to his keeping, at least so far as they were capable of being imparted. He was satisfied with the committal, and only wished they might minister to his enjoyment by being constantly before him ; therefore he began a preparation of the home to which he had invited her. There was something more than convenience studied in those arrangements. There was allowance made for taste and pleasure, as objects here and there testified, and the effect of all was heightened according to the imagined appreciation of the fair one for whom it was designed. The value of all was estimated by the same standard ; and when the time for final introduction came, the countenance of one was indicative of eminent satisfaction, and the other of grateful surprise at such lavish provision for happiness. Mutual love was the charm that added the zest ; and as I viewed it, I thought, here is shadowed forth the principle upon which God acts in the preparation of a home for his loving ones. He is arranging it for thee now, O Christian, and the furnishing of it will be according to the richness of his own nature and the unexampled wealth at his disposal ; and in the day when he shall call thee to minister unto him, in his immediate presence, a glad surprise will doubtless await thee, because of the loving care that is manifest in the ample provision for happiness in its varied forms.

We are poor, and can do nothing to aid in adorning or in any way furnishing our celestial home to which we are invited ; but nothing is required save the offering of a confiding, loving heart, and yielding this, it is ours to share the full inheritance.

CHAPTER XXV.

SOCIETY OF HEAVEN.

Beautiful Elements in Nature. — Man communicative and receptive. — Jesus loved Society. — Soul made for it. — Degrees in Heaven. — Society of Angels, of Christ. — Love the prime Characteristic. — Perfect Appreciation found only in full Fruition.

“The fellowship of noble men,
Refining now, transcendent then,
In zeal, and power, and purity;
For this, to all eternity,
When death for life exchanged shall be,
Dear Lord, I'll render thanks to thee.”

GOD has much to do with beautiful and joyous elements in his plans, and these are eminently conspicuous in the social instincts, and the provisions to meet their demands. Deeply wrought into the structure of the human soul are desires and affections that must have objects upon which to devote themselves, or its joy will wither, pine, and die. With their necessities met, the vigorous outgrowth is such as to challenge admiration, both for its use and beauty. They spread broader and deeper, and rise higher, sending out new tendrils, that attach themselves to new objects, which they cover with their rich unfoldings.

They cannot live and thrive alone. They must be engaged in imparting and receiving, or they fail to realize the true condition of growth and development. They must be met, must be reciprocated, or the soul becomes a desert — an absolutely sterile waste.

They who love most, usually find themselves enriched with

the return of the same quality in equal degree; for like the thing of ancient story, it may be constantly poured out, and yet be undiminished in quantity, or less powerful in itself, in its own inherent worth and ability. The more love is exercised, the stronger it becomes. The more it is restrained, and the more it is withheld from others, the more intensely selfish does one become, and in corresponding proportion is manifest what is meant by degradation of soul and unloveliness of character.

God is continually imparting, and he has made the happiness and the well-being of his creatures to rest upon the same service. Unmindful of the condition, man forfeits all claim to the chief good; and though he studiously seek to appropriate it to himself, to his own individual advantage, it is certain he will fail in the attempt.

There is no such thing as a really happy selfish man. Man was not made to live for himself alone, and if he try, he finds himself out of his native element, and like the fish exiled from its watery home, he is uneasy, and the life dies out sooner than if he had been surrounded by native and appropriate influences.

One thing intertwines another for the good of mankind, and the process of untwisting is unnatural, and induces weakness where God ordained strength; it makes that solitary which, it was intended, should be united with its kindred filaments. "I am instituted for the pleasure of others," is a voice that seems to come from everything in nature; from loftiest systems and lowliest flowers; from the soft tones of the low, murmuring rill of the mountain and the trumpet eloquence of many-tongued ocean, that pays its mighty tribute to the world.

Who has not walked abroad in the shaded avenues of the summer forest, and seen the principle illustrated there in the ivy that clasps the oak?

It creeps upward, sending out new shoots and fibres, and is beautiful and luxuriant while thus protected and embraced; but let its support be taken away, and it trails upon the ground,

bruised, broken, shorn of its glory, with scarce a trace of its peculiar character. The course which Heaven directs for the ivy is upward, and its nature is clinging and confiding, and we admire it most when we find it in the position it was designed to fill; so when we find man fulfilling the purposes of his being, when we see his social nature rising and developing, when we see it turned into the right channel, and growing under auspicious influences, we feel that he is approximating somewhat unto the standard that was erected for him. He must needs mingle with his fellow-men in mutual and loving intercourse, or the tender qualities of his social nature will forever remain in the bud, without disclosing their interior richness at all. What is a hermit's life but a waste? It is folly to imagine that the graces of character and goodness of heart can be as well cultivated in a desert or cave as out under the broad sunlight of the moral hemisphere, where the dews of kindly charities fall softly, and yet with power upon the heart, causing sweetest blossoms to spring up and send forth fragrance to cheer and bless others.

They will not reach perfection in the shade. They will be like the slender, sickly stems of the plant that is shut out from light and heat. The appropriate nourishment is wanting, and there is no proper growth.

History tells us of an individual who was condemned to years of solitude, to perfect exclusion from the world and men, and during this time he grew so ignorant of the amenities of life that at his release he was unconscious of obligation and unfit for its discharge.

His mind had reached a state of inanity, in which he scarcely comprehended the commonest things, and his heart was barren of those things that a social atmosphere would have developed.

Isolation is unnatural — God has made it so; and it is productive of most disastrous results to those who are forced into it. Its very air is withering, contracting souls and hearts until they

are very unlike those that came from the hand of a benevolent Creator, expansive, and capable of performing great and heroic deeds. The social law is everywhere apparent. Flowers are arranged in species, and these have kindred wants, form, and color, giving the same odor, and presenting the same appearance wherever they are found. Trees send out their seeds to the passing breeze, which deposits them in the soil below, and they spring up, nestling around the parent tree, as if they would tell of reciprocal interest; and animals group together in herds, and the alarm that awakes consternation in one affects the whole. Birds are wont to gather in companies, and sail through airy regions for a common end; and bees centre where their king alights. In all these God had bid us look and see the advantage and security to be obtained in loving union, — the dignity and pleasure of well-ordered society.

Man, preëminently distinguished by the endowment of reason, is called to the maintenance of society upon a loftier basis; but the lower orders of creation might furnish him with beautiful models with which he might rear his own superior structure with additional advantage.

Selfishness is not invested with the highest kind of skill, nor does it work with ease, for it is the use of powers in just the way they were not made to be used, it is the employment of them in direct opposition to the divine method. The whole constitution of man is an exhibition of God's benevolence, and he is called to make a similar display according to his ability, not indeed in creation, but in the imitation of those virtues which form the divine character. There is no higher style of life than to live to do good. This was the life that Jesus lived. His sympathy extended to all classes, to the poorest and most abject, and his pardon was freely given to the penitent, though he had sinned grievously. He shunned not these, but he loved to turn in where loving circles delighted to greet him, that they might listen to heavenly teaching, that they might minister unto the wants of his sacred person. With

such he chose to "abide," and to such he made known the richest communications of his truth. It was a blessed interchange they experienced; but Christ would have more than these occasional interviews; therefore he selected the band of twelve, that in the society of these faithful ones he might, as it were, have fullest scope for the exercise of his social nature. How perfect was their confidence, how rich the communion of those congenial souls that were united to each other and to their Lord! And from these went forth a hallowed influence that is felt in society until this day, and shall never lose its power while there are Christians upon earth to commune with each other.

Friendly meetings and greetings, under ordinary circumstances, are pleasant and satisfying. Perhaps there is no higher earthly enjoyment than that which is realized in the circle of true and tried friends, who care for us, sympathize with us, and attend us all the way of life with unabated affection. And this life-long devotion seems the pledge of its renewal and perpetuation in another world, if it stand upon the holy basis of Christianity.

"All are friends in heaven — all faithful friends;
And many friendships, in the days of time
Begun, are lasting here, and growing still."

This indeed invests Christian society here with an indescribable charm, for it is a preparation for the banquet that is spread in the Father's house, and to which all are invited who have a taste for sacred things. The tie which binds Christians together, while they are here below, is strong. The links of the chain which encircles them are forged in heaven; and if, now and then, we miss a bright one, it is because the heavenly Workman has need of them in higher service, and takes them.

It is infinite and all-embracing love that lets down the chain from the blissful heights where it is wrought; and it is the same that will eventually draw those in the circle in holiest bonds around the throne. And if there is so much to be enjoyed in social life upon earth, amid all the imperfection incident to

human nature, with so much of misrepresentation and misunderstanding as there always is, then what will it be to find its full perfection in a sphere where these things are all unknown? Friendly intimacy is a tree laden with rich fruit, its luscious burden continually dropping all about us, and it is that to which we cling with the greatest eagerness when we feel our hold of life loosening, and are conscious that we must launch away. As time and its joys gradually recede, there are none that retain a greater charm than those experienced in the society of friends whom the heart loves. So powerful is their attraction, that it costs the ripest Christian, with his clearest hopes, a pang to resign them for a season. This fact, however, foreshadows the richness of heavenly intercourse. He who made the social nature what it is, and provided so amply for its conditions here, will surely give equal attention to its enlarged capacity there: and what, then, will it be to enjoy the society of heaven? Who will compose it, and what position have we to expect in those high circles? Shall we sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and hear from them the stories of their pilgrimage, and of their long experience in the promised land? or will the difference be so great that there can be no reaching the lofty heights to which they have attained? For centuries of our time they have been looking into the scheme of redemption, learning rapidly under their divine Teacher, and have reached a stature we cannot comprehend, but possibly may attain some time in the ages of eternity, at which period they, too, will have made corresponding progress, and remain at equal distance from us in point of knowledge and excellence. But if we enter the golden gates, the same principles which animate their bosoms will animate ours; the same love which incites them to holy action will incite us also; and the same gratitude which inspires their songs will be the soul of ours too. Their Saviour is our Saviour, and their God our God; and the same atonement and cross in which they glory will be our glory as well. Will not this awaken a common

fellowship, and make them feel an interest in all those that are saved, though they came from obscurest vales of earth, and knew poverty and tribulation? If anything, it might seem that a fitness for such wonderful distinction as a seat in heaven, wrought out under such circumstances, would so enhance the divine love and mercy that it would immediately call forth the adoration of the highest intelligences, besides granting a welcome to the happy recipients of distinguishing goodness.

There are different gifts and graces bestowed upon individuals in this world, and there are some prepared for positions that others are not at all fitted for, and we recognize the arrangement as wise and necessary. There have always been different standards in the church from the time of the apostles to the present, and what is characteristic of the church militant, may be, in a measure, of the church triumphant. If all were to stand equal on Mount Zion above, then would it be natural to suppose that they would stand upon the same level here, for the nursery of heaven is below, and the preparation will doubtless bear some relation to that which is to follow. Uniformity of knowledge and attainment would not be a desirable state of things in any society, either on earth or in heaven. It certainly detracts nothing from the society of the celestial world that there are degrees of happiness and glory there. The most eminent Christians that we know now excite our highest respect and admiration, and they stimulate us to emulate their zeal and virtue, though it may be we are not wholly exempt from feelings of envy; but in that place where so unamiable a trait is never manifest, it may be supposed that we shall feel corresponding emotions to those far above us. In proportion to their holiness, and likeness to Christ, will be our love for them. So far from the difference producing a shade of dissatisfaction, happiness will be increased by it. The purely benevolent rejoice that another has gained a reward better than they. They forget their own standing, their own merit, in the joy they feel in the prosperity of others. The highest style of benevo-

lence exists in the community of the saints, and love there will flow from heart to heart, extending through all ranks up to the "favorite angel" that stands nearest to the dazzling throne. It may be that our familiarity will be with circles of congenial spirits, who, like us, move in a given sphere, and are fitted for certain employments and for kindred action; but, whatever be our position, it is safe to say there will be enjoyment to the fullest capacity.

Some will be capable of enjoying more than others; they have done more than others; lived longer for Christ, worked longer in his vineyard, and gathered more sheaves for the Lord's garner. They have added more gems to the Redeemer's crown, and consequently feel more interest in the radiance emitted therefrom. They have an experience that those less faithful and earnest cannot have, and this is according to reason in every department of life. It is just that reward should bear a relation to service, and it is true that interest and appreciation are measured by the amount of effort that has been given.

Those that have gathered rich spiritual harvests, who have been instrumental in winning many souls into the kingdom, will have an element in their cup of bliss that some will not have. Those that consecrated themselves to Jesus in the glad morning of existence, will have a remembrance, a present joy, the depth of which cannot be found in him who gave the remnant of his days, when he was worn out in the service of the world. Grace has done its work for all the heavenly inmates, and they are happy, but it is happiness controlled in some measure by their course on earth.

"Will not Paul, who was counted worthy to suffer so much for Christ, be happier, when he reviews from his seat in glory the fortunes of his eventful life, than the thief who became a believer upon the cross, who was saved as by fire, and who, besides his repentance and acceptance of Christ's mercy, had perhaps not one good deed to follow him? It may be said that the joy of the great apostle, equally with that of the thief, will consist in

adoring that condescending love which snatched him from the jaws of hell: this will no doubt be one element in his bliss, to which the other will be added. He must behold, with exceeding delight, the still increasing effects of his wonderful ministry. The same with other eminent Christians." They are to shine as stars forever and ever, as those of the first magnitude, while those of lesser power fill their appropriate orbit with their own intensity of light, an intensity, however, that might have been greater by the more rigid observance of the rules of that philosophy of life which the Divine Mind has written out as a basis for the celestial.

The husbandman who plants much, and bestows corresponding labor, has a richer harvest than another who has done less. He has a right to more, and he expects more, and the same principle is true in the spiritual world—they that plant and sow shall reap the reward of planting and sowing in their future life, and that shall be according to the seed and the cultivation, not by the quantity of ground occupied.

Poor sufferers, that have not been able even to cast in the seed, but who have watched and prayed with patient and thoughtful interest for hopeful indications of refreshing showers to bless the moral world,—such shall find their patience has brought them a harvest of joy they did not expect. Christian endurance of suffering may exalt one to a loftier seat in heaven than might have been obtained by the most vigorous action in seemingly more favorable circumstances. Not as man judgeth, but as the Lord, will be the final disposition; justice and equity are what every saint will find to be the inscription on the particular post assigned him.

Perfect satisfaction will make every countenance radiant with divinest love. Perfect joy will fill all hearts as they mingle together in delightful intercourse. They shall come "from the east and the west, from the north and the south," and sit down to the heavenly banquet—welcome guests to a glorious feast. Blessed are they who shall be gathered there, who shall forever remain recipients of such refined and select society.

A godly lady was called to leave her pleasant home, and the privileges of cultivated society, for a new and almost uncivilized portion of the Western world. Nature was fair and lovely in the place of her adoption, but she pined for the congenial circles she had left, the sympathy of friends, and the thousand nameless advantages of superior life. Nothing external compensated for these; and finding her spirit depressed under the influence of the deprivation, she went out into the temple of nature and reared an altar to the Most High, whom she besought to bring her into more perfect sympathy with the great company that he had gathered to himself, and whom she hoped to join when the discipline of life should be finished. She came to live more and more in anticipation of that time, and in communion with the unseen found the demands of her soul more fully met than she had known before. Once admitted into the celestial society, there will be none of these painful expulsions, no removal into distant and uncongenial climes, no separations from the loving and confidential who seemed almost necessary to existence. There is no isolation there. The social delights are unfailing, and those who enjoy them live and abide in them forevermore.

It is counted a great honor among the sons of men to be invited to sit at a table at which great men preside, men who are distinguished in the varied walks of life as persons of genius or erudition. These seasons are regarded almost as epochs in individual history, and they are reverted to in thought and conversation with peculiar interest. If this be pleasant, who can tell the joy that will thrill the soul when the invitation of the heavenly King shall sound in the ears, "Come sit at my table, and listen to the eloquent sentiments of those whom I have brought from every nation and condition, embracing every variety of talent and disposition, all sanctified by grace, and of the fulness and sweetness of which its possessors stand ready to impart!" It is an honor to be a guest at such a table, to be counted one of such an assembly. "That

gathering," says one, "will embrace Abel, Enoch, and Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua, Samuel, David, and Josiah, Isaiah and all the prophets, John the Baptist and the evangelists, Stephen, and the whole glorious army of martyrs. Who shall undertake to estimate the pleasure and profit of conversing freely with him who was the first to enter heaven; with him who, in the midst of antediluvian giants, walked with God; with him who passed out of the ark on Mount Ararat, built the first altar in the solitude of a depopulated world, and gazed on its first bow of promise; with him who built an altar on Mount Moriah, and with him who was laid an offering thereon; with him who put off his shoes on Sinai, and forty days and forty nights spake familiarly with God in the thick cloud that was on the mount? O, what will be the luxury of listening to the psalmist of Israel as he strikes his heavenly lyre! of sitting down under the tuition, successively, of all those holy men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost! What rapture must there be in talking with those who had the gift of tongues, who wrought many miracles, and — what is far more memorable — went everywhere, in the midst of perils and reproaches, as the first ambassadors for Christ!

"That banqueting assembly is not, however, limited to Scripture worthies. It embraces multitudes from subsequent times. There sit Ignatius and Polycarp, Augustine and Chrysostom, Athanasius and Basil. Around that board are gathered the mighty army of Protestant reformers, the chief fathers of New England and Old England, and the renowned champions for truth and holiness from all countries and all centuries of the Christian era. Who will not esteem heaven a more desirable place because John Howe and John Owen are there? because Usher and Leighton, Wesley and Whitefield, Eliot and Brainerd are there? Who will not esteem it peculiar happiness to associate with one who discoursed so fully on the 'Saints' Everlasting Rest,' and with one whose sweet strains are sung Sabbath

after Sabbath by thousands of assemblies on earth? Who will not be rejoiced at such an interview with that ingenious dreamer who immortalized Bedford Jail, and whose Pilgrim has gone forth over all the earth?"

There they gather in common fellowship, moved by one impulse, and that is *love*. They stand in one and the same relation to Jesus. They have been redeemed by his blood, and have, therefore, the same bond of sympathy, and are encircled by the same divine Presence.

Moreover, our intimate friends and acquaintances are there, those whom we knew, that we mingled and conversed with when they were upon the earth. They have grown wise in the new economy. They have become initiated into the mysteries of the unseen, fluent in the dialect of the saints, and can impart much that to us is sublime and wonderful. They have their place at the social board, and contribute to the richness of the occasion.

Sitting by their side, they might tell us of the peculiarity of that victory which they obtained; how infinite love was the key that unlocked every prison door; of deliverances that were wrought for them by more than angelic skill when they saw no way of escape, and how they were conducted through the dark valley, and of the cordial reception they received at Immanuel's court, the conclusion of which might be a grateful song for so glorious a triumph.

We may find, too, eminent Christians who have influenced us, though we have never seen them. The record of their noble deeds, their fidelity in the cause of Christ, their devotion and self-denial, may have reached us, and influenced us to do more than we should otherwise have done. It may indeed have allured to the decision to begin the new life, to choose the good part, and consecrate heart and soul to Him who rightfully demands it. If ever thrown into the society of these, shall we not seek an introduction to them, or shall we be drawn intuitively, as to those to whom, under God, we owe much? If

they have been the means, though unconsciously, of shaping a soul in its heavenward course, of perfecting it, in any degree, in the divine life, they will not be ignorant of it through all eternity. It is service for which they will be rewarded; and this implies a revelation; and, this made known, will not the desire of recognition arise, coupled, perchance, with another, to be of continued service, that prompts search through the blessed ranks for the person thus enlisting our regard?

"Many," says Whately, "have lived in various and distant ages and countries, who have been, in their characters, in the agreements of their tastes, and suitableness of dispositions, perfectly adapted for friendship with each other, but who, of course, could never meet in this world. Many a one selects, when he is reading history, a truly pious Christian, most especially in reading sacred history, some one or two favorite characters, with whom he feels that a personal acquaintance would have been peculiarly delightful to him. Why should not such a desire be realized in a future state?"

Friendships are limited in this world, not only to those who live in the same age and country, but to a small portion even of them, — to a small portion even of those who are not unknown to us, and whom we know to be estimable and amiable, and whom we feel *might* have been among our dearest friends. Our command of time and leisure to cultivate friendships imposes a limit to their extent: they are bounded rather by the occupation of our thoughts than of our affections. And the removal of such impediments in a better world seems to me a most desirable and a most probable change.

Not only will our earthly attachments remain in connection with those who have trod the same path to glory with us, with whom we have taken "sweet counsel" together in heavenly things, but, in all probability, the circle of acquaintance will be continually extended in heaven. We shall rejoice in new friendships and new attachments, and thus find the bounds of our society enlarging, to our infinite and eternal advantage.

There will be the kind, the sympathetic, the loving, in short, the "pure in heart," the "just made perfect," and in their society we shall feel perfectly at home, either understanding or easily made to understand every topic which engages their attention, and at the same time feeling an interest commensurate with its importance. To these circles we shall be made fully welcome. There are no discordant elements there, no selfish hearts, no jealous spirits, none that are envious or uncharitable, nor any to bestow the unfriendly and furtive glance.

What happiness to mingle in such society! What joy to have access to such circles! We wonder not that a devout soul exclaims, "O, blessed and glorious society! where no contentions ever arise, where no malignant spirit interrupts the universal harmony, where no malevolent affection is ever displayed, where no provocation disturbs the serenity of the mind; where not one revengeful thought arises against the most depraved inhabitant of the universe; where a single falsehood is never uttered; where folly, impertinence, and error never intrude; where no frown sits lowering on the countenance, and no cloud ever intercepts the sunshine of benevolence; where 'Holiness to the Lord' is inscribed on every heart; where every member is knit to another by the indissoluble bonds of affection and esteem; where a friendship is commenced which shall never be dissolved; where love glows in every bosom, and benignity beams from every countenance; where moral excellence is displayed in its most sublime, and diversified, and transporting forms; where 'a multitude which no man can number, from all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues,' join in unison with angels and arch-angels, principalities and powers, in swelling the song of salvation to Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever."

It is to such society as this that Jesus would introduce us, for this he seeks to fit us in all those events that look so mysterious and strange to us. It needs preparation — a peculiar

preparation; and who knows better than He how we may best secure it? We are not only to mingle with those, who, like ourselves, have been "aliens and strangers," but have received the "adoption," with all the advantages accruing therefrom; with those who have wandered and been reclaimed; but there will also be intercourse with angels — the sinless ones, who stand, an innumerable company, around the holy throne. And who can tell what advantage the soul will derive from such fellowships as these? from the engagement of the faculties with such high intelligences? How rapid must be its progress in "knowledge, holiness, and bliss" under such diversified and happy influences! What blissful themes of converse will be introduced, what delightful thoughts interchanged! The angels know nothing, practically, of redemption. They "desire to look into it;" and as they hear the story of the cross from those who have felt its life-giving power, and are saved, what will be their admiration of the wonderful plan! — for they, too, though spotless, are subjects of the divine government. Yet they are to be our associates forever — our loving and loved companions, whose attendance and intimacy are to have no abatement in all the ages that we shall know. They, doubtless, will be our teachers in the studies that we shall pursue; they, whose knowledge has never been obtained from any earthly fountains, whose philosophy has not been derived through any imperfect and uncertain process. They have always drawn directly from the overflowing fountain of eternal truth, and are, therefore, eminently qualified to act the part of teachers in the exalted sciences of heaven to those who, in comparison, know but little more than the celestial alphabet. Although they stand as superior intelligences, there will be, nevertheless, an element in the song of the redeemed that they cannot fully comprehend. They have never felt the power of sin, never exulted in the blood of the Lamb as delivering them from it, and they cannot join, as saints do, in the anthem of praise for the all-atoning sacrifice.

Their knowledge is varied and extensive; their sympathy perfect and all-embracing, according to the law of the realm; but there is a difference that must ever remain, though not such as to cause a line of separation. Angels belong to heavenly society — they constitute a part of it, and we, if redeemed, shall also have a right in it. What, then, have we to anticipate! In view of it, the longing soul has often exclaimed, —

“I want to put on my attire,
Washed white in the blood of the Lamb;
I want to be one of your choir,
And tune my sweet harp to His name;
I want — O, I want to be there,
Where sorrow and sin bid adieu;
Your joy and your friendship to share,
To wonder and worship with you!”

The obscure and lowly Christian, who is denied access to the circles of so-called refined and polished society, has withal a prospect of being admitted into full communion with saints and angels in the brilliant mansions of the City of God, of being escorted through those more than princely halls by willing and thoughtful guides. It is for such to share freely and fully in all the pleasurable provisions of the place, with the feeling that they are in the possession, the enjoyment, of that which was intended expressly for them; which was arranged with special reference to their coming.

They are invited into full fellowship with all who sit at the social board of heaven, whatever be the rank from which they came, whatever position they have previously held. They have too many things in common there for division of feeling; too many things of mutual interest to be estranged, or indifferent to each other's happiness and welfare. Their “feelings, hopes, and aims” are emphatically one there. Society is held together by a bond that cannot be broken. Its strength and unity can never be unfavorably affected, for the Saviour himself preserves its brightness and beauty. He watches over the vast assembly; he is himself the leading spirit, the chief

joy -- all that makes heaven what it is. If he should withdraw himself, the glory of Paradise would be gone, the beauty of the Holy City faded, its charm fled, and deepest gloom would darken the heavenly atmosphere, and there would be night there. Society would lose its attraction, though angel and archangel, and saint of every degree, remain.

The social attractions of the upper sphere are, indeed, very great, when viewed from points already mentioned; but every Christian will say, It is not enough unless Jesus be with me there. It is not shining streets, nor pearly gates, nor any external consideration that is going to satisfy the Christian heart in heaven. It is not friend, angel, cherubim or seraphim, that will fill his soul to satisfaction, but the smile of Him who hath redeemed him. This is the prime characteristic of heavenly joy, the distinctive and blessed feature of its society, its crowning glory, and this is what hope exults in as it looks eagerly forward from every Christian observatory.

But will there be personal fellowship between Christ and all his saints? Are we to aspire to this, we, so low, so unworthy, who have done so little for the honor of his name, whose love-returns have been so meagre, and whose concern for his glory has been so small?

The sacred record has such intimations, and it warrants us in cherishing them. It tells us that we shall see him, serve him, and reign with him, and this in such a manner as to imply intimate communion with him. It was enough for the dying thief to hear his Lord say, "To-day shalt thou be with me." The heavenly host might surround him, but the joy of pardoned sin never came from them. They never expunged a single stain that had rested upon his guilty soul, and there must needs be the assuring face that had beamed so kindly upon him from Calvary, or he could not be happy, nor feel that his title was secure. So will it be with us. We must needs have the presence and fellowship of Jesus to make heaven complete. He only can meet the demands of the soul; and this he knew when his love

for his disciples prompted the petition, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me."

Christ has consummated a vital and tender union between himself and his loving and faithful ones, and he meets them often in loving communion while they are upon the earth. He draws nigh as they approach the sacramental table, to commemorate the wonderful exhibition of love displayed by the cross, and gives visions and anticipations that kindle a higher flame on the altar of devotion; he visits them when they are in sorrow, and pours the oil of consolation into their troubled bosoms; he is by their side when they faint under the burdens of life, to sustain and uphold them; he comes at the trying seasons of bereavement, and assures of his unfailing friendship; when joys that have been dear to the soul take wings and fly away, he whispers with gentlest voice, "Fear not, little flock." "Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

Precious are these interviews with Christ below. They make the soul glad when all things else are withdrawn. The Christian heart prizes these infinitely above every earthly consideration, and it mourns unceasingly if they are inconstant and few, and looks within and around to ascertain the cause of the painful absence. It matters not what are the surroundings; affluence and luxury may smile, and prosperity of temporal nature abound, but the soul pants for the light of his face, who is "chief among ten thousand," and the one "altogether lovely," and it cannot be satisfied until the celestial beams are obtained.

This light will beam in heaven steadily and everlastingly. The soul's prospect will never be dimmed or clouded in the least. It will never mourn the hidings of God's face; for Christ will commune lovingly and constantly with the redeemed. "O, what rapture will that be! Happy were the wise men when they found him at Bethlehem; happy was gray-headed Simeon when he saw him in the temple; happy

the woman with whom he talked at Jacob's well; happy his own mother as she sat at his feet; happy the disciples whose hearts burned as he talked with them by the way; happy the whole brotherhood when he came suddenly into the midst of them with his heavenly 'Peace be unto you;' but all these favors were only faint foretastes of the intimacy of heaven. To stand side by side with the Lord Jesus; to walk with him in light; to lean where the beloved disciple leaned — that, that is heaven." He is, indeed, "the bright and morning Star" of that blessed world; not less the "Alpha and Omega" there than here. Ah! heaven is his presence, be it where it may, and for this, in this, and to this, is the end of the Christian's hope.

There is no narrative that so thrills the soul of the believer as that of the life of Jesus; his leaving his Father's throne, and coming to a sinful world to be "despised and rejected;" to live in obscurity and indigence when his soul had been accustomed to the holy refinements and unexampled wealth of the celestial kingdom, and all from purest benevolence to a fallen race.

Deepest emotions are stirred by the wondrous record of Him who went over the hills of Judea and the vales of Palestine doing good, who comforted the sad, healed the sick, raised the dead, walked on the sea, rebuked the winds, stilled the tempests, taught by the wayside, prayed on the mountain, was apprehended by enemies, scourged in the judgment-hall, forsaken by friends, left to the agony of Gethsemane, burdened with the cross, crucified on Calvary, laid in the tomb, arose in triumph, and finally ascended from the midst of his weeping disciples to his throne again, having completed the most wonderful scheme that men or angels ever beheld. What an exhibition is here! Its full expression is hidden from the power of language.

Its fullest appreciation will be known in heaven, where it is constantly studied; but there will never be a time there when we shall have learned so much that there will be nothing more to learn.

There, before us, will ever be the same Jesus whose wonderful history has so engaged our attention, whose life and death have been so replete with interest to the soul feeling its eternal destiny dependent upon him. Christ is the Christian's watchword, his talisman, his all; but, with his highest conceptions, it is little that he knows while he is an occupant of flesh. Such is his feebleness of intellectual apprehension he does not comprehend him perfectly; and such is the vacillating condition of the heart, it wavers between him and the world. This may, and will be, a matter of deepest regret to those desiring holiness, who would cordially embrace Christ, and live with an abiding sense of his favor; but they will have more or less of this to contend with while they remain subject to mortality.

They must emerge into the full light of immortality before they will comprehend and appreciate perfectly the salvation procured for them by the atoning Lamb. They must mingle in the society of heaven, and hear the saved and the pure tell of joyful completeness before they will realize the whole of its meaning. Ah! they must hear Jesus himself saying "Good and faithful" before the fountain opened for salvation will pour the full tide of bliss upon the ravished and satisfied soul. A glimpse of heavenly glory made Jacob feel that his nightly couch in the wilderness was none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven; and if a transient view be so sweet, what must be the abiding vision within the gate? Christ, saints, and angels are there; friends, connections, and acquaintances; "apostles, martyrs, prophets, all." To their society we are invited. Who would not be a guest at so distinguished a feast?

CHAPTER XXVI.

ANGELS.

Guardian Angels. — The Good and Evil. — Angel Organism. — Their Appearance to Patriarchs and Prophets. — Swift-winged. — Their appropriate Office. — Silent Ministration to Christians. — The Relation of the Earthly and the Heavenly.

“ With saintly shout and solemn jubilee
 All the bright seraphim, in burning row,
 Their loud, uplifted angel-trumpets blow;
 And the cherubic host, in thousand choirs,
 Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
 With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
 Hymns devout and holy psalms
 Singing everlastingly.” — *Milton*.

It is a beautiful thought entertained by some, that each individual has his guardian angel, in constant attendance, prompting to beneficent thought and action, and restraining, by gentlest influence, from unhallowed desires and purposes through all the devious pathway of life. In all waywardness and folly, the same pure and unwearied companion is nigh to guide, suggest, and bless; to celebrate every victory, and record every triumph, and to convey the welcome intelligence to the waiting host above by the telegraph that is ever open between himself and heaven. Every milestone that is reached in the advance course to the celestial city is a Bethel where Christian and the angel rejoice, recording new conquests and new hopes, besides receiving strength to proceed with new alacrity and vigor in the part of the journey that yet remains — a part that would be toilsome and wearisome without loving and heavenly guidance.

Over against this loving union, and in contradistinction from it, is another opinion, that an evil angel likewise obtrudes himself, and persists in his right to incline in such direction as his fiendish nature prompts, thus placing one in the very centre of good and evil, with scarce power to maintain even an equilibrium, to say nothing of progress in the heavenly course. We know there is much in life that corresponds to this ; that it is a series of conflicts from the first moments of discretion to the last moments of rational action ; but we know not how much of it is attributable to angelic agency. We know not if these whisperings, that bid us proceed or beware, come from these unseen attendants that closely follow us in our walks, triumphing in our woe or our weal, according as we yield or stand firm.

It is not to be denied that there is something very pleasant in the thought that a pure spirit continually surrounds us, intent in every act to further our interest in the great salvation, to keep us steadily fixed in a heavenly direction, to aid us in every struggle to overcome sin and the world, and to turn us when inclined to be recreant to our high privileges. To have an angel in this lonely world for a guide, protector, and prompter, is an inspiring thought, though he be unseen.

The very consciousness of such a presence is elevating to the soul, and asserts its grandeur and the dignity of its calling. If it be of such importance that it be placed in the guardianship of pure spirits from the heavenly world, surely its final destiny is a matter of consequence. If, while subject to earthly influences, it be thus lovingly embraced, how much interest it bespeaks for it in Him who made it a living and accountable being.

In this, however, we would not lose sight of the grand, central idea of the Christian faith, which is the abounding grace of God, nor of the indispensable ministration of the divine Spirit, through whose agency alone the soul is made to comprehend its true position, and seek for refuge in the "hiding-place" under the shadow of the cross.

Jesus, as we have said before, is the sun and centre of the Christian system ; neither saint, nor angel can fill his place, or usurp his prerogative ; but we know the latter have been employed by God ever since the creation of man, to say nothing of ante-mundane existence, and in such a way as to make them the medium through which he would communicate himself and his will to mankind. Angels have a part in Bible history, from beginning to end, and we inquire with deepest interest about those intelligences, who bear such important and interesting relations to man, as these are seen to have. They "shouted for joy" at the grand exhibition at the creation of the world, when He, to whom they had ministered, displayed in such a wonderful manner his omnipotence and his glory, his love and benevolence. All we know of them is their action, and it is this which, in all cases, reveals true character and motive. We know not much of their likeness, nor is it necessary that we should. The common and most prevalent idea, perhaps, is that they are pure spirits, without the organic surroundings to which mortal men have been subject, and that when they have assumed a form, in the fulfilment of their earthly errands, they have done it only as the necessities of the occasion required. It is true they have never been encumbered with dust-made bodies, that limit the purposes of the active and willing spirit ; age and infirmity have had no influence in retarding their execution of the divine plans, and they know not either diminution or decay of benevolent power. Theirs is immortal energy through past and future eternity ; but there is evidence that they are endowed with senses by which they see, appreciate, and love, thus presenting something more than intangible spirit.

They are, indeed, unseen to mortal eyes now ; their visitations are silent and unobserved by those that are visited ; but in like manner is it with saints whose sympathy we would fain believe is not wholly cut off, though they are removed from sight, and who yet are to have a body, though glorified.

If they have material bodies, with their attendant sensations, these doubtless are of finer mould and more exquisite sensibility than any. It argues not against their existence that they are invisible, that our present organs of vision fail to discover them, though they touch us with their wings in their soothing embraces.

"In every instance in which angels have been sent on embassies to mankind," says one, "they have displayed sensible qualities. They exhibited a definite form, somewhat analogous to that of man, and color and splendor which were perceptible by the organs of vision; they emitted sounds which struck the organ of hearing; they produced the harmonies of music, and sung sublime sentiments, which were uttered in articulate words that were distinctly heard and recognized by the persons to whom they were sent, and they exerted their power over the sense of feeling; for the angel who appeared to Peter in the prison 'smote him on the side, and raised him up.' In these instances, angels manifested themselves to men through the medium of three principal senses, by which we recognize the properties of material objects; and why, then, should we consider them as purely immaterial substances, having no connection with the visible universe? We have no knowledge of angels but from revelation; and all the descriptions it gives of these beings lead us to conclude that they are connected with the world of matter as well as with the world of mind, and are furnished with organized vehicles, composed of some refined material substance, suitable to their nature and employments."

When Christ shall appear the second time, we are told that he is to come, not only in the glory of his Father, but also "in the glory of his holy angels," who will minister to him, and increase the splendor of his appearance. Now, the glory which the angels will display must be visible, and, consequently, material; otherwise, it could not be contemplated by the assembled inhabitants of our world, and could present no lustre

or glory to their view. An assemblage of purely spiritual beings, however numerous or exalted in point of intelligence, would be a mere inanity in a scene intended to exhibit a visible display of the "divine supremacy and grandeur."

The fact of material aids is not an essential consideration; but if we admit it, we must acknowledge something incomparably superior to all known ideals, as, of necessity, they far transcend all present power of comprehension. Who can tell what beauty appears in a shining angel, one whose countenance is radiant with celestial glory, long beheld, until it is stamped upon the glowing features in lines of indescribable loveliness?

Such appeared to Mary, when she

"To the Saviour's tomb
Hasted at the early dawn,"

to muse where her heart's affections lingered, around the rocky sepulchre of the garden, which held, as she supposed, the object of her love — her adorable Lord.

With snow-white raiment, and countenance like lightning, they sat on the sepulchral stone, awaiting the coming of the faithful women to whom the joyous revelation was to be made known in tones of sweet assurance. "He is not here; he is risen: come, see the place where the Lord lay." They appeared in the freshness and beauty of youth, although for thousands of years they had been in the active service of the Most High. In their august presence the earthly-minded keepers fell with trembling to the ground, scarcely able to sustain life in the midst of the overwhelming splendor they brought to shine around the sacred and memorable spot where they were gathered. Surely angels must have regarded that place with the deepest interest — that place where the occupant of the eternal throne had been laid, a seeming victim to the power of death, and where he had risen in triumph over it, and gone his way, to establish his identity among his fearful and mourning disciples, that were scattered in the

gloom-enveloped city that had witnessed his spotless example and teaching — his unmerited and ignominious death. If they are permitted to come to this world, we should naturally suppose their interest would cluster around a point of earth so rich in association as this, and that utmost beauty of expression would centre in their divinely-radiated countenances as they looked at the grave that had no power to retain its trust, and consequently was the attraction of faith and hope with millions yet to come.

They rolled away the stone with ease, as we may conclude, since they are said to "excel in strength," to be "strong" and "mighty," never wanting in disposition or ability to perform loving service for Him who so richly deserves it. As evidence of this, they are said, in Revelation, to hold "the four winds of heaven," and are represented as executing the judgments of God upon the proud despisers of his government, as "throwing mountains into the sea," and binding the prince of darkness with chains, and "casting him into the bottomless pit."

They have been prime agents in God's universal plan, and have been fitted by him with a nature and capacity equal to the magnitude and interest of the work to which they have been called, and in which they have been engaged, in all his vast empire. The range of their activity is not circumscribed to our world alone, probably, but to farthest extent of creating skill they may be commissioned on errand of holiest love — on embassies of peace and highest good will. "Such is angelic readiness to fulfil Heaven's behests," says one, "that were two sent to earth, one to bear supreme rule in a proud metropolis, and the other to sweep its streets, there would be no pride in the former, no envy in the latter, but willing activity in both." They are subject unto God, and rejoice in the subjection, having no independent and rival interests to work out and sustain, but deriving their life and returning it to the one Giver of all, as they hold offices under the divine government. The duties of office are discharged with wonderful alertness, as they are

endowed in such a manner as to allow amazing rapidity of motion in the conveyance of themselves from one portion of the world, or one region of God's empire, to another.

It was while Daniel was earnestly confessing Israel's sin, and making supplication for the people, that "one with the similitude of the sons of men" touched his lips, and revealed new glory. Ere he had finished his request, Gabriel had arrived from the heavenly world to speak peace and comfort to the burdened heart of the devout suppliant. Even Daniel, in sympathy with God, was dumb for a season at the glorious vision which appeared unto him at the hour of his solitary devotion, — at the visitation of the angel.

In power, beauty, and perfection he so much surpassed all that he had ever seen among men at the Babylonian court, that his address was as unto his "Lord," whom he conceived to have met him because of the manifest glory about him, as well as by the cheering hopes inspired in his breast.

"O man, greatly beloved," said the holy visitant, in familiar communing, by which he evinced an acquaintance with relations subsisting between himself and his God, or, perchance, with others in the world, hereby affording an intimation of the minute and varied knowledge of those celestial beings, which extends, it seems, to every particular that concerns the welfare of men.

At another period he wings his way to a humble maid of a Galilean cottage, and in affectionate condescension tendered his gracious salutation, "Hail, thou that art highly favored!" And, as he beheld the risings of agitation in the bosom of his youthful subject, he inspires her confidence and kindles her faith in the heavenly intelligence by words of sweet assurance: "Fear not, Mary!" "the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee!"

What a meeting was that! Gabriel, who "stands in the presence of God," and a poor maiden, of an obscure and despised village. Were men of the world to plan a reception for so lofty a personage, they would pass by the indigent and the

lowly, and seek only proud position in circles of wealth and honor. Not so the infinite and condescending God. He sends his most honored ones to the poorest and the lowliest who wait on him, or whom he would win to his service in a life-engagement; and there is more joy in one such heart to whom God sends an angel, than could be secured by the most obsequious attention of any earthly monarch. Next to direct revelation of God himself, in holy communion, are these angelic visitations, for they convey the sure intimations of the divine will. They impart simply and only that which has been intrusted to them by Him who has all the secrets of knowledge and action in his own keeping. The messages which they deliver are but a recapitulation of those which proceed from the mouth of the Lord. As a faithful and trusty servant is careful to deliver according to the direction of his master, in like manner do angels prove true to the confidence reposed in them, since they are, by perfect constitution, altogether in unison with the divine counsels, and deeply interested in the success of all things which in any way redound to the honor of Jesus. Their feelings move in entire harmony with the whole will of God, and their knowledge is derived from him, the minuteness and perfection of which are exemplified in the fall of the Assyrian army, one hundred and eighty-five thousand of which were slain in a single night through the agency of one of these beings; in their recognition of the first-born in the land of Egypt, in the distinction made between the chosen and the doomed, and the means employed to insure the destruction of the latter.

Thus it seems these holy beings are not ignorant of things in this world; that they are acquainted with the springs of life, and the means of perpetuating or restraining them. They have been taught of God for ages, and are, therefore, in possession of wonderful knowledge and vast comprehension of intellect, which fit them most emphatically for extensive achievement. Everything in their history combines to produce a high degree

of excellence and power. "They dwell in a world where truth reigns triumphant, where moral evil has never entered, where substantial knowledge irradiates the mind of every inhabitant, where the mysteries which involve the character of the Eternal are continually disclosing, and where the plans of his providence are rapidly unfolded. They have ranged through the innumerable regions of the heavens, and visited distant worlds, for thousands of years; they have beheld the unceasing variety and the endless multitude of the works of creation and providence, and are, doubtless, enabled to compare systems of worlds with more accuracy and comprehension than we are capable of surveying villages, cities, and provinces. Thus their original powers and capacities have been expanded, and their vigor and activity strengthened; and, consequently, in the progress of duration, their acquisitions of wisdom and knowledge must indefinitely surpass everything that the mind of man can conceive."

From the fulness of these intellectual treasures they will, in all probability, be constantly drawing and imparting for the happiness and edification of the saints. They have witnessed, and may have had part in, the wonderful epochs of the divine administration, which have been distinguished for great and beneficent deeds; their service has brought them into portions of God's realm which no mind that has ever passed from earth has ever comprehended; with wide observation and holy intuition they have studied causes and effects in such manner as to gain varied stores of rich information, such as the heavenly inhabitants delight to treasure up.

Far back in patriarchal times we see them engaged in their blessed work. Under a dispensation less favored than ours, they acted a conspicuous part in the revelation of God's purposes to his ancient people. Abraham, reposing in the shadow of his tent in Mamre's plain, beholds them coming, and, struck with their strange majesty of bearing, and heavenly expression of countenance and demeanor, he bows humbly and rev-

erently before them, entreating them to turn aside, become his guests, and submit to the hospitalities of earth.

With what grace did the messengers from the celestial world comply, waiting in the cool shade, while within the tent was the preparation for their refreshment! "So do, as thou hast said," say they, but it was for none of these things they came down to the dwelling-place of the faithful, for the "fine meal" and the "tender calf" were not to be compared with the choice and nutritious food awarded them at their own royal table in the skies. Their refined and spiritual natures needed not the coarse nutriment of earth. The Lord had a secret to reveal, a promise to make — one that involved much, very much; and it was to make this known that these celestial ambassadors trod the plains of Mamre toward Abraham's tent, and finally halted to rest and to eat beneath the tree at his door. It was a fit errand for the angels to do, — honorable work for the loftiest in their ranks, thus to show the purposes of the Most High to the children of men, — to bring joy and consolation into their waiting hearts. Evidently they take a deep interest in the welfare and happiness of mankind. The righteous Lot, preserving his virtues in the midst of a wicked and perverse people, becomes the object of their regard, and the subject of merciful interposition in the time of danger, when an angry cloud brooded over the city where he dwelt.

The isolated Christian is remembered and watched wherever he be. The solitary man of Sodom who kept the faith must be rescued from the impending destruction, and his household, of all these, must experience salvation in some way or other; and that way must surely be provided by the Power above, since the thoughtless and wicked crowd that surrounded him were absorbed in the gross things of the sensual world, and wholly occupied with efforts to secure their continuance.

Behold the angels nearing the gate of the doomed city at eventide, at which sat the man of devout spirit, mourning, it may be, at the infidelity of the people of the land, whose merited

reward seemed the judgment of heaven, unmeasured and unmitigated.

Perchance, at the hour of twilight, he had gone forth to muse alone upon the prevailing impiety, and was then silently breathing his petitions into the ear of God for relief in the hour of extremity, when the heavenly visitants came in sight with their welcome instructions. He rose to meet them, with becoming salutation, and besought the honor of giving them a place under his roof; and what a contrast between the pure-minded guests of the house of Lot, and the impious throng that encompassed the place, from which they found it necessary to shield and defend him! Their power is manifest in that they smote the ill-meaning people at the door, both "small and great," with blindness, thus putting an end to their dark designs, and quieting the soul of Lot, whose veneration for the unearthly strangers had called forth earnest rebukes from his lips in their behalf and the morning light witnessed their interest too, for they hastened to take the family by the hand and urge their flight from the storm-enveloped city, nor left them until they saw them well on toward a mountain of safety.

It was an "angel of the Lord" that winged his way to the mount of Moriah, at the solemn hour of sacrifice, to stay the uplifted hand that was ready to fall upon the beloved Isaac of promise, and that confirmed to the submissive and faithful father the fulfilment of the intimation that told of peculiar and wondrous blessing to descend upon him and his posterity.

It was likewise the Lord's angel that appeared unto the family of Manoah to foretell the rising of a day of unexpected joy upon their little circle, and to answer their questions, save such as, whence he came and what might be his name. There he was silent — that was a secret. Michael and Gabriel are the only angel names we know, and we may profit by that which the visitor of the two of Zorah spoke — "Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is a secret?"

Honor was the consideration advanced, but the angel, in

his humility, would have it understood that sacrifice and offering belong unto God, and are not due to a subordinate being like himself. Of kindred spirit was the one before whom John would have bowed down in holy reverence, because of the glorious vision which he had showed him of the heavenly Jerusalem and its attendant glories. "See thou do it not," said he, "for I am thy fellow-servant," — "worship God."

Angels are humble. This prime virtue is exercised by them in its perfection. They "veil their faces" before the throne of glory upon which sits the pure and spotless Jesus, and cast their crowns with adoration, and yet with humility, at his feet, joining with full chorus in the song, "Thou art worthy."

Beautiful are their ministrations wherever we meet them. In very many instances in the Old Testament are we made acquainted with their manner of working. They drew near the famishing Elijah to sustain him; they rebuked the Israelites at Bochim, so touching their hearts that "they lifted up their voices and wept" because of their sin; they sent Gideon to their deliverance, and spoke words of comfort to those that were fearful and desponding.

No sooner does the New Testament open, as the "day-spring from on high," than forthwith angels appear to inaugurate the auspicious era, and herald the coming of Him who was henceforth to be the Prince, the King, the Everlasting Monarch among men.

"On earth peace, good-will toward men!" shouted the angelic host, for there had been born in the city of David a Saviour — Christ the Lord. It is not strange if there was a rustling among the wings of cherubim and seraphim as the tidings became known that the "healing beams" of the "Sun of Righteousness" were to be seen and felt in all the earth, in every part of the darkened and sin-cursed land, nor that they hastened to celebrate the advent of Christ. Heaven was their home, their peculiar residence. It had been that of Jesus; and with what interest they followed him to his low estate on his wonderful mission! Could

not angels be sacrificed to save a revolted world? Could not some other way be provided to secure the necessary atonement? No! neither angel nor archangel was sufficient for the mighty purpose. Jesus himself, the pure and Immaculate One, must submit to humiliation, to a life of obscurity and a death of ignominy to secure the result, and angels would be honored in the privilege of attending him and guarding him on the way. They were with him in his temptation and his agony, and stood ready, in "legions," to fly to his aid in whichever or whatever way he required it; and they stood by the gazing disciples, in "white apparel," at the time of the ascension, to assure them of final and blessed reunion with the Lord they loved in the place whither he had gone, when they, too, should have accomplished their mission in the world of probation; when they should have reached the end of the "strait way," that Jesus himself had paved with glory, and illuminated from the eternal and uncreated Source of all light. What strange joy must have filled and animated the shining hosts above, as the cry went forth from the illustrious Sufferer, "It is finished"! What emotion was kindled in all the blessed ranks when he re-appeared on the throne in all his glory, having completed the stupendous work of man's redemption! Heaven was glad. Angels and men rejoiced together over the mighty scheme. Although the "bright and morning Star" had disappeared from the horizon below, there were still lights to be trimmed and kept burning, and for this angels continued to descend and ascend on divinely-constructed ladders, to aid in a work that had assumed new interest, since the Incarnate One had been willing to do so much for its advancement.

Cornelius, Peter, and Paul severally experienced the visitation of angels, and rejoiced in the deliverance they wrought for them in times of extremity, when, humanly speaking, there seemed no possible way of escape. Iron gates, bolts and bars, were no obstacles in their way. They needed no keys to unlock the dungeons of confinement save the word the Almighty had bid

them speak. Quick coming from the world of light they retained their own celestial radiance, and filled the gloomy prison-rooms with unwonted splendor, assuring the believing soul that heaven was moved with compassion for their woes, since earth could boast nothing like unto what they saw. Forth into the street, by and beyond the anxious keepers, through self-opening doors, on to the place of prayer, the captives were led ; and as they were near the assembled praying company the angel departed, as if safety was secured in the atmosphere of prayer ; as if there was no doubt that the right thing would be done if they remained in communion with Him who had passed into the skies ; as if the highest interests of mankind would certainly be cared for effectually while the disciples mutually retained their attachment to their common Lord. Angels, it seems, conduct toward the place of prayer, but leave their charge in the shadow of the mercy-seat, as if they were conscious of treading on too holy ground, as if they would resign them to the better care which Jesus can exercise over them.

The praying circle, who were met "with one accord" at the room to which Peter directed his steps when he was brought from the prison, were in a condition to realize more of actual good, more of that which the necessities of their souls demanded, than if they had been literally surrounded with a convoy of angels, and limited to their ability, though they had power to break chains, and strike their foes with blindness.

Angels could not forgive sin, — the accursed thing that erected the cross of Christ, — they could not free the spirit from its dominion ; and this was the aspiration of the early Christians, as it will be that of Christians in all time. It bespoke the tenderest care in the ascended Jesus that he gave his followers into the charge of angels, that he sent them to guide and defend when his friends were sorely harassed and tried by the enemies of religion — the persecutors of Christians and Christianity. It spoke the infinite love of his compassionate heart when he sent these tender and faithful guardians to direct the steps of

his chosen, so that they might be kept in the way, finish their course with joy, and leave their names on record as those who obtained a victory through the power of that grace which flowed out from Calvary's fountain.

There are some things that flourished and died in the bosom of the primitive church. There are agencies that have ceased, — but not such, we believe, is angelic ministration.

It was not alone to the patriarchs and prophets, to the favored ones in the days of Christ and apostolic times, that their commission extends. The humblest Christian, in every age, though he be poor and unlettered, unfamiliar with science or luxury, has yet the unspeakable pleasure of furnishing an apartment to which he may invite the wealthiest residents of the heavenly city, with the sure knowledge of their cordial acceptance. He may entertain them, too, in a manner that will excite their deepest interest, their warmest approbation, in such a way that they will go back to heaven with an eloquent description upon their lips which will send a new thrill of joy through all the circles of the very select society there.

To such a high privilege as this is the Christian called. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation?" asked the apostle, whose clearness of spiritual apprehension beheld an "innumerable company" encircling the redeemed host whom Jesus had gathered. He saw "a great cloud of witnesses," where others could not discover a single indication of a living presence. The angel at the sepulchre was not the same to the unregenerate keepers as to the loving and faith-inspired women. They love to visit the same places that Jesus loves to frequent — "the humble and contrite heart;" they love to carry back the record of faithful and devoted service; of battles won and victories gained by valiant soldiers of the cross. They love to tell above the resolutions of repentant souls; to celebrate the birthdays of immortal spirits into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

They love to take the gift of consecration, and bear it to the

Lord of heaven and earth. "The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold and ascend to heaven," said Mr. Whitefield, in the impassioned earnestness of his preaching, "and shall he ascend and not bear with him the news of one sinner, among all this multitude, reclaimed from the error of his ways? Stop, Gabriel! stop, Gabriel!" was his almost involuntary exclamation, as with gushing tears he lifted his hands and eyes to heaven. "Stop, ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God."

That "there is joy among the angels of heaven over one sinner that repenteth," we know, for the Bible assures us of it. From this, we conclude, they bend down with peculiar pleasure over those assemblies moved by the Spirit's influences, until the proud are subdued, the hard-hearted softened, and the penitent tear and expressive sigh tell of heart-yearnings to find a forgiving God. At such times Faith almost hears the rustling of their wings, as they linger to catch the sacred tidings, and to breathe inspiration into waiting hearts that would fain become versed in heavenly things. The sacred lore of the skies is imparted to mankind before they reach the heavenly hills — before they lay aside mortality, and become all eye and ear in the acquisition of knowledge respecting redemption and its manifold and glorious results.

There is a relation of the deepest interest between Christians and angels. "The particular ways and instances of their special efforts as our allies we know not, nor do we need to know. It is enough for us to be assured that an immense host of these efficient guardians is in attendance upon the heirs of salvation."

Our journey from the cradle to the grave may be performed with angel guides, that will save us from many a fruitless task, if we will; that will restrain us from entering the paths which allure and promise much, but yet end in destruction and death; that will keep us from the gloomy alleys of unbelief, the broad avenues of sin, and the dark caverns of despair.

Verily, "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Nothing is of slight moment to them that the Great Redeemer regards, nothing so important as his honor, and this is secured by the perfection and final salvation of immortal souls. As one after another of these is brought safe home to glory, through manifold temptations and trials, through numberless conflicts and struggles, pure, sanctified by the efficacious blood of Jesus, surely it must

"Wake songs of holy ecstasy"

among these holy beings — these loving and faithful guardians, whose influence has done so much in perfecting the result.

They forsake not in death, in the last trying hour — rather it is their hour of triumph, when, amid the agonies of dissolving nature, the spirit that is stayed on God is calm and joyful in the prospect of being conveyed across the dark stream to the immortal isle. "Now, angels, do your work," said a faithful man of God, who stood on the boundary line between the seen and unseen, ready for angelic attendance to his prepared mansion in the skies.

"What glory! the angels are waiting for me!" said another, whose spirit was plumed for his hallowed flight to the upper world. This is but the experience of many Christians. They have seen celestial visitants in the chamber of sickness; and the bed of death has been changed into the couch of ease, because of the loving embraces that have been given; because of the glory that has come down as an earnest, a foretaste, of that superior bliss which will be theirs when the angels have led the way to the place where the heavenly banquet is spread, and shown them their seat in the midst of those that are accounted worthy to sit down to "the marriage supper of the Lamb."

They are unseen ministers all along the pathway of life until the last — until earth and time begin to recede, and the loves and friendships of this world begin to fail and fade away,

then they become visible guards, that the soul may see how many more are its spiritual friends, and how much more trustful in times of emergency they are than the strongest and most loving of kinsmen according to the flesh. They introduce the dying Christian to heavenly joys.

Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom — into the Paradise of God. What a contrast! From being a poor, helpless beggar at the gate of a rich man, without the common comforts of life, or the priceless boon of sympathy in his distress, with not so much as a friend to mitigate his suffering by kindly effort to soothe, — from all this, to be transported into the midst of the most loving and sympathizing circle ever known, to find a cordial welcome into the most refined society that could be imagined, to wear a robe of the most costly fabric that was ever purchased, and to bask in the sunshine and smiles of a loving Father forever, — to all this the angels conducted Lazarus, and to this will they introduce every saint at last.

In the panorama of Pilgrim's Progress, and at the closing scene, where Mercy is kneeling at the shore of the swiftly flowing Jordan, a band of shining ones crowd around to escort her safely over into the Promised Land — into the Golden City, whose gleaming battlements are discernible at a little distance. The joy that is visible in their countenances is reflected upon hers, and the mutual recognition seems to inspire the invitation, "Come quickly," and take me to my rest, to those that I love, to Jesus whom I adore.

Again, we have seen the picture of a bright-winged creature, stooping down to earth, holding with one hand the brittle thread of life, and with the other pointing to the towers of the Celestial City, that appear through an opening of the clouds, while the serene and placid expression of countenance seems to resolve itself into words something like this: "Look continually yonder in all thy earthly course, for he will be kept in perfect peace whose mind is thus stayed."

These are not altogether the speculations of fancy — something that exists only in the doubtful regions of the ideal. They have their counterpart in real life in God's world. We are constantly directed toward the Holy City. Angels guard our steps by day, and watch by our pillows at night, until we lie down upon the earth-made pillow to sleep our last sleep, and then they take the spirit to its God and its home.

They also are to be employed at the end of the world, when earth's assembled millions shall be gathered around the great white throne to know the settlement of their final destiny. Angels are to be the reapers in that great harvest, to be participants in that solemn work of saving the wheat and burning the chaff. They are God's workmen, efficient everywhere, at all times, and upon all occasions.

They are willing coöperators with Jesus in the great work of salvation. They have never sinned, and therefore know nothing of redemption in its experimental application; but they watch with deepest interest those for whom Jesus died, and rejoice in every new accession to the Redeemer's kingdom.

Is there no comfort in this, O Christian? It is true, none can fill the place of Jesus: he is the "chiefest among ten thousand;" he only can speak peace to the stricken, tempest-tossed ones on the stormy sea of life; he gives himself first, but in the plenitude of his mercy, and the tenderness of his love he sends his angels, with their sweet promptings and gentle influences, to be the soul-companions of his friends while they remain exiles from their Father's house and their native land.

Who would not cherish a thought so delightful as this — the guardianship of angels! And if we be thus defended and aided, will there be no desire, when landing on the immortal shores, to know personally those who have thus guarded us? Will they not recognize those whom they have brought through dangers and struggles, and welcome them to the place where there is no more sin or care, no more occasion for conflict or watchings?

The happy child sings, "I want to be an angel," and the young mind is full of bright visions of the spirit-world; and shall the faith-inspired Christian, of maturer years, feel no quickening of desire under the influence of the "ministering spirits" who would lift him up into the blest abode where they dwell?

There is such a thing as having the soul borne to heaven on the wings of faith and strong desire before it leaves its tenement of mortality. There is such a thing as imbibing the spirit of heaven below; of growing into the likeness of Christ, and enjoying the fellowship of the saints; and the train of influences set in operation by the divine hand is to secure this end.

For this purpose angels receive their commission and go forth on their loving errands. Say not because they are unseen they are unreal. Religion does her work silently but effectually. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth."

We know not the full extent of the power of silent, and, to us, unconscious, ministration to which we are subject in our spiritual life, nor how much intercourse spirit may have with spirit in the earthly and the heavenly. Our gross senses preclude apprehension; but if our eyes were opened, as they might be, and as one day they will be, we should see that "they who are for us are more than they who are against us."

We are warranted in the belief that angels do minister unto the children of God, and it is a precious thought.

"Yes! — may ye not, unseen, round us hover,
With gentle promptings and sweet influence yet,
Though the fresh glory of those days be over,
When, midst the palm-trees, man your footsteps met?
Are ye not near when faith and hope rise high?
When love, by strength, o'ermasters agony?"

"Are ye not near when sorrow, unrepining,
Yields up life's treasures unto Him who gave?
When martyrs, all things for his sake resigning,
Lead on the march of death, serenely brave?
Dreams! — but a deeper thought our souls may fill, —
One, One is near — a spirit holier still!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

RECOGNITION OF FRIENDS IN HEAVEN.

Complex Nature of Man. — Friendship a divine Institution. — Views of the Ancients concerning heavenly Recognition. — Modern Christians. — Scripture Facts. — Christian Anticipation. — New and constant Acquisition of Good.

“I count the hope no day-dream of the mind,
 No vision fair of transitory hue,
 The souls of those, whom once on earth we knew,
 And loved, and walked with in communion kind,
 Departed hence, again in heaven to find.
 Such hope to Nature’s sympathies is true;
 And such, we deem, the holy word to view
 Unfolds : an antidote for grief designed.” — *Bishop Mant.*

LIKE to “a harp of thousand strings” is the being of man. The varied chords of the human soul, and the numberless strings twined about the heart, are so tuned and arranged as to emit sounds of sweetest melody, producing vibrations that do not die out in reaching the utmost boundary of the shores of time, but extend down eternal ages, increasing in power and effect, and in sweetness too, unless they are so misused as to become hopelessly out of tune, and remain capable only of discord.

The Almighty never tuned any other instrument at all comparable with the human soul. Let a breath of heaven sweep over it, and it awakens songs that the angels listen to with rapturous delight, — that even Jesus loves to hear, — he, into whose ear comes the harmony of all worlds and systems of worlds.

Give it the inspiration of love, and it is heard warbling strains of the richest music, that melt the hardest nature, and awaken tender sensibilities long dormant. Touch it lightly,

and notes of sympathy are evoked that soothe, as if by magic, the most anxious and depressed ; that are wafted, it may be, across pathless seas, to be caught by the loving and appreciating on the far-off shores of a distant continent or country, and appropriated to purposes of comfort and consolation, to the lightening of burdens that otherwise might seem heavy.

Put down thy lips, and blow softly upon the supple strings, and a low, sweet cadence mingles in pleasing harmony with the duller passages of sober and practical life, making that which before seemed like the uneven chantings of unharmonious verse as the measured stanza of divinest poetry, whose flowing numbers beget a kindred symphony. Let the action be rude and unskilful, and it awakes echoes that are harsh and piercing. Whatever be the air required, lively or plaintive, whatever be the time, quick or slow, the soul-organ is equal to its production.

It is finely constructed, and has numerous keys. One of these is *remembrance*. Touch it, and like an electric power it startles and sets more in motion the hitherto sluggish thought and feeling. There is an irrepressible demand of the heart for the music of loving voices, — and the recollection of those who produced the soul-stirring melodies comprises no small portion of life's joy.

Other things may fade away, may be as though they had never been ; but the clear notes that sound so sweetly in the glad morning, ring in the chambers of memory long after the shadows of evening begin to close in over the weary pilgrim, and the eye kindles with unwonted fire, while something almost like youthful animation is manifest in the furrowed countenance.

The memory of early friends is always cherished and retained. The impression they make upon the heart is never wholly erased. The outlines, at least, remain as the basis of recognition in after years. Many things may come in to obscure its brightness, but it is not wholly lost. It was

intended to be so. God made provision for these daguerreotypes; he prepared the inner tablet for the express purpose of receiving and retaining these impressions. He placed love in the centre of being, and drew us toward it; so that the affinities which are the result of its attraction are as necessary a law as that which draws together the steel and the magnet in another department. God meant the name of *friend* to be dear, and faithful and tried ones are considered the choicest gifts of time. He meant, that around the home circle should cluster the dearest, sweetest sympathies; that the chain which girds it should be of the strongest links. In all this he manifested the tenderest regard for the weal of mankind. He gave a fertile nature, and then provided fertile resources, and said, "Go, cherish and improve them." Would he have done all this for a span of time? Would he have implanted so strong a principle, to destroy it forever when it has reached its height in this world?

The yearnings of the loving nature might indeed have been satisfied entirely in the absorbing love of God himself, and the fibres of being which reach out for something around which to cling may find ample support in the spreading branches that reach down over the jasper walls of the Holy City — this should be the basis of all things, but we are made for something more. The loving voices and smiles that greet us all along the pathway of life are as so many sunbeams that the tender Father above has caused to shine around us for our peculiar gratification. He has made them to gild the dark seasons of adversity, and light them with cheering radiance; to give gladness, and disperse despondency and gloom whenever their raven wings overshadow the soul. If the voice be hushed, and the smile play no more upon the cheek of death, then Memory begins her work of consolation; chiselling the features in substance more enduring than marble, and dwelling upon and preserving every look, tone, and word with careful exactness, thus creating a likeness that in after years is recog-

nized as *the* one that was once a reality to us. "Have you a picture of your child?" was asked of a lady who had buried her only one. "None, except in my heart," was the tearful reply, "but that is fixed and fadeless. I can always recognize it."

So inwrought is this principle into the constitution of being, that it cannot die out unless the soul dies. The disembodied spirit, it seems, must remember and recognize those it loved, and that which engaged and enlisted its attention and interest in the days of its fleshly experience. It is a part of itself. The discipline made it what it is, and to a certain extent fitted it for its place in glory — increased its capacity for heavenly friendship and employments.

Shall we know each other in a future life, is a question that the heart has asked for long ages. It went side by side with the question of immortality in the earliest periods of inquiry. In the same breath that one was asked was the other submitted.

If death was only to be the introduction to a new life, the continuation of an endless chain of being, then how much would the spirit take along, how much retain of its earth connections? The question has never ceased in interest; still we hear the inquiry, —

" Shall there be bright ones in that better land,

Who still the old familiar faces wear,

Amid the beauty of that spirit-land,

For us the loveliest and the brightest there?

" When the freed spirits ' face to face ' shall see,

Clothed in new beauty, gloriously fair,

Shall it not then a crowning rapture be,

Each other's bliss, each other's smiles to share?"

God sometimes sends little, loving creatures here for a brief while; and when we have kept them in our bosoms until the tendrils of affection have taken firm hold, he comes and tears them away; and while we look up tearfully submissive, the rising suggestion of the heart is, Shall we meet again to love and know?

We spend a great part of life in the mutual intercourse of confiding friendship, and almost come to believe, it may be, that we shall first sleep, and thus be saved the lingering tortures of bereavement; but suddenly the support is taken, the joy removed, and again we ask, Shall it be ours to know a glad reunion in the time to come, when we go where the loved has gone?

It is true, the light of Christianity beams for us, shedding peace upon the spirit groping on its way, and letting fall the rays of certainty; but the question was not so satisfactorily answered for the ancients. They asked, as we do, Shall we meet to know? But echo mockingly returned the same words, and their souls were not satisfied. Reason came with her lamp, and sought to illumine the dark recess for them; but the flame was glimmering and uncertain, and the abyss needed something more than fitful flashes to light it. "Are there not numbers who, upon the death of their lovers, wives, and children," says the Athenian philosopher, "have chosen, of their own accord, to enter Hades, induced by the hope of seeing there those they loved, and of living with them again?" The great truths of immortality and friendly recognition seemed to cast their shadows upon the spirit of this same man, as he stood with the fatal hemlock in his hand, which was to open the gates of futurity for him, and thus discoursed: "If it be true, that death conveys us to those regions which are inhabited by the spirits of the departed, will it **not** be a matter of unspeakable joy to escape from the hands of mere nominal judges, and appear before those who truly deserve the name, such as Minos and Rhadamanthus, and to associate with all who have maintained the cause of truth and rectitude? Is it nothing to converse with Orpheus, and Homer, and Hesiod? Believe me, I would cheerfully suffer many a death on condition of realizing such a privilege. With what pleasure could I leave the world to hold communion with Palamedes, Ajax, and others, who, like me, have had an unjust sentence pronounced against them!"

Similar ideas were entertained by another, that drew forth the confession, "I ardently wish to visit those celebrated worthies, of whose honorable conduct I have heard and read much, or whose virtues I have myself commemorated in some of my writings. To this glorious assembly I am speedily advancing; and I would not be turned back in my journey, even on the assured condition that my youth, like that of Pelias, should be restored again." The classic poets cherished the same aspiration. It was a deep-seated want of their being not less than of ours. They earnestly desired to meet those they had found congenial upon earth, and hope foretold a reunion amid Elysian scenes. How would the passage have sounded in their ears, uttered with all the eloquence of unquestionable certainty, — "Then shall I know, even as also I am known"? It would have been as a rock in the place of the uncertain foundations on which their hopes were built; as a resting-place where the weary wings of doubt might be folded, relieved from the necessity of beating about among the winds of conjecture.

This same truth found a lodgment in the minds of the primitive fathers, who thought and wrote much of spiritual things. "Who, finding himself in a strange country, does not earnestly desire to return to his fatherland?" says Cyprian, in the third century. "Who, about to sail in haste for his home and his friends across the sea, does not long for a friendly wind, that he may the sooner throw his arms around his beloved ones?"

We believe Paradise to be our fatherland: our parents are the patriarchs: why should we not haste and fly to see our home and greet our parents? A great host of beloved friends awaits us there; a numerous and varied throng, — parents, brethren, children, who are secure in a blessed immortality, and are looking with desire for our arrival. To see and embrace these, what a joy will this be to us and them!

Ambrose discoursed upon the benefits of death; upon those things he fully believed he should realize when he should pass out of probation into eternity, when he should see the unseen

and know the unknown. "We shall go to those who sit down in the kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," he says; "we shall go where there is a Paradise of pleasure, where Jesus hath prepared mansions for his servants, where the glory of God alone shines, where the thief himself rejoices in the participation of the heavenly kingdom, and where there are no more storms and vicissitudes — and this to be shared with those we love."

Chrysostom and others indulged in the same inspiring hope, and drew consolation therefrom when those with whom they had held sweet counsel were taken from them. They believed in a meeting on heavenly plains where the communion of kindred souls would be perfect and lasting. They believed that they should recognize prophets and apostles whom they had not seen, but who, nevertheless, had wielded a powerful influence in the development of their inner and spiritual life.

Such, too, is the belief of Christians in general. They who sing from the heart, —

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love,"

see a deep and precious significance in the blessing. The "tie" is not of earthly origin or character; it binds to the throne of God, and encircling this, embraces the whole brotherhood, the entire family of the redeemed, awakening a common interest that will grow broader and deeper as eternity rolls on. There are no indissoluble bonds but those formed by Christ. They always endure. There is no imperfection in heavenly union. The clear transparency of character there, the motive-power of action, are so perfectly manifest there is not even the liability of misunderstanding, not even room for the shadow of anything doubtful.

Loving each other and their God, and recognizing in each a resemblance to the great prototype, they constantly find food wherewith to feed the rising emotions of love and admiration. Every new acquaintance in the blessed circles will have some

new wonder of grace to relate ; some victory or triumph that others have not known in all its details. What joy in an instance like this, to experience a sudden recognition of one whose salvation had been tenderly cared for and earnestly sought, whom faith had borne to the mercy-seat in closet silence, but whose salvation was not fully known until it was learned in an interview in heaven. Doubtless these recognitions there will unfold results that present comprehension would deem marvellous indeed. We shall never know the extent of our influence until we learn it above, until we look out from a celestial standpoint ; but how doth it become us to let it be felt for Jesus, that it may be gathered up at the last as a fragrant offering to him, a benefit to others, and a lasting joy to ourselves !

The disciples on the favored mount were so affected by the recognition of Moses and Elias, that, in the intensity of their emotion, they exclaimed, " It is good for us to be here ! " How often will this be reiterated by the saints in glory as some new link is added to the chain of attachment, some new experience is gained of redeeming mercy ; for it is not our personal friends alone, those whose every lineament we bear about with us, that we shall know in heaven, but we shall have intercourse, as time passes on, with those who are newly arrived, and perchance with those who have long been in heaven.

The idea of meeting friends who have gone before is certainly a prominent part of Christian anticipation as it draws near the time of full fruition. Those who have frequented beds of death have observed the strength of this feeling in the dying saint, and the power it exercised in producing submission. Those, whose friends have mostly passed over on the other side, find themselves living more there than here ; and the hope of meeting them, of looking upon them, and renewing the pleasures of intercourse, gives wings to desire, and makes them long to join them, where the pleasure will no more be mingled with pain. " I shall meet my companion, my child, my friend," says the dying believer ; for one of the first thoughts when death sum

mons the Christian is the happy meeting that will take place with the departed friends in glory. Next to the smile of Jesus is their welcome, and it is they, he would fain believe, who come to form part of the convoy that wait upon him to the spirit land.

"I see her, — my mother," — said an expiring believer, in tremulous tones, as she passed from earth into heaven.

"I shall soon see Mary," said one, who felt herself nearer heaven than earth. Mary had been her friend in years that were gone, and was almost the only one she had ever missed from the circles of earth. The household band was entire, unbroken, and Mary was the friendly spirit to which she turned as the one to recognize in a world of spirits, so natural is it for the human heart to count upon loving recognition, both in this world and the next. It is an irrepressible desire of the soul.

Said Baxter, whose soul was always glowing with the fervor of heavenly love, "I must confess, as the experience of my own soul, that the expectation of loving my friends in heaven principally kindles my love to them on earth. If I thought I should never know them, and consequently never love them, after this life is ended, I should in reason number them with temporal things, and love them as such. But I now delight to converse with my pious friends, in a firm persuasion that I shall converse with them forever; and I take comfort in those of them who are dead or absent, as believing I shall shortly meet them in heaven, and love them with a heavenly love, that shall there be perfected."

This is the hope of all Christians — a hope that controls and chastens grief, and extracts the sting from those otherwise intolerably painful partings which occur in the history of almost every individual upon earth. "It is but a little while, and we shall meet again," are the comforting words whispered in the ears of tearful kindred in thousands of instances. Whence this universal hope but from the Almighty? Whence this

desire, everywhere prevalent, for a renewal of earthly fellowship, but from Him who made the heart, and endowed it with capabilities which find scope only in such a fruition?

The apostle Eliot gained the confidence of an Indian chief, and was successful in leading him to embrace the truth of the Christian system. Rejoicing in the richness of his new-found hopes, the convert loved his guide and teacher, and in the simplicity of his faith came to him with the inquiry, "Shall I know you in heaven?" It touched a chord in the good man's heart, and he thought of "jewels," of "stars," and of "crowns of rejoicing," and said, "Surely the saints shall recognize those they brought to Jesus." Personal identity, it is believed, will never be wholly lost. The apostle and his convert will both carry their spiritual characteristics into another world. The latter will always gratefully recognize the influence of the one that taught him of Christ and heaven, and together, it seems, they will rejoice in that which they have been able to contribute to the glory of the Redeemer's crown. Can they ever cease to keep each other in grateful remembrance?

The distance cannot widen between them — throughout eternity will the same relation exist.

Henry Martyn studied the character of David Brainerd until he was possessed of the thoughts and feelings of his devout spirit, and the kindling of sympathy led him to exclaim, "I feel my heart knit to this dear man, and really rejoice to think of meeting him in heaven."

The pious Newton mourned the death of his bosom friend — the beloved and amiable counsellor and companion of his days; and in the sadness of his bereavement he looked forward to his entrance into the Promised Land, where, said he, "my dear Mary is waiting for me, as I humbly trust, and whom I shall join in sweetest praise when we meet together there."

Whenever we look upon the records which Christian hearts have made, we find the same expression, the same acknowledgment. Inspiration, it is true, is not explicit on this point. It

does not directly assert it, nor contradict it; on the contrary, it is everywhere implied, and many other truths stand in like position.

David never seems to have entertained a doubt but that he should again embrace the child of his affections. "I shall go to him," is the confident declaration he makes to those who feared the demonstration of grief which might ensue upon the knowledge that his little innocent had departed.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me," says Christ to those standing at his right hand; and will there not be a recognition between those "brethren" and those who have ministered unto them in such a way as to secure the approbation of the great Judge? Lazarus knew him on whose bosom he leaned, and Paul speaks of those who will be presented together in the day of the Lord Jesus, as knowing, even as they are known.

Surely we may count upon the joyful recognition of friends, upon meeting the loving ones in the streets of the New Jerusalem, and walking with them "in white" on the holy errands on which our Lord may send us. If the attributes of mind bear a relation to the Eternal Mind, they are imperishable in their nature; they cannot die nor cease to be active. Memory, then, must survive the tomb; and if so, then recognition must follow. Besides, nothing that will enhance the joys of the redeemed will be excluded from Paradise. They are social beings there, and must derive their pleasure, to a certain extent, through mutual and loving intercourse; and the remembrances, brought from another state of existence, will not be obliterated.

Those who have been loved upon earth must be regarded with a more perfect interest under such favorable circumstances, since attachments there are all sanctified and cemented by Jesus, whose love surpasses all other love. He loved the souls that he called from the darkness of nature into the light of his truth when they were upon earth, and he loves them still with

infinite love, when they bow before him in glory, ascribing the praise of their salvation unto him forever.

Something like to this will be the love of saints, — the same in kind, though not in degree, but fervent and abiding. The chief attraction of heaven, however, is by no means this, that we shall meet friends to know and love them; neither is it probable that first thoughts upon entering that happy place will centre in these. The soul, exulting in the benefits of redemption, in free and full salvation, will be absorbed in Him who is the "author and finisher" of so glorious a scheme, and be especially sensible of grateful emotions that will lead to the most devout expression of gratitude because of being called to so blessed an inheritance. Jesus himself will be the bright centre of the heavenly world — the attraction first and last.

Friendly reunions are indeed a very pleasant feature of the place prepared so lovingly for the saints. It is delightful to think of them. There are hours in which mourning hearts find themselves relieved of the heaviest burdens of grief by the anticipation of what is before them. They catch something of that exquisite joy which is to be theirs when the veil is removed, and "face to face" they behold the glorified ones, whose absence from earth was such a grief to them. The mother lays the child of her love in the grave, and says within herself, "We shall meet again; it shall be mine to gaze upon the cherub face in the better land."

Those in every relation of life are called to experience the sundering of ties of varied strength; but in each and all of these instances the Christian has the consolation, for the mitigation of his sorrow, that heaven is a place, not only of union, but of joyful recognition. They might meet there, and pass each other by, all unconscious that once they had deemed each other almost necessary to existence; that once, in the confidence of love and friendship, they had known unmeasured delight — the dearest pleasure. But not such, we believe, are the characteristics of the heavenly state.

The utmost freedom and cordiality will exist among the saints. Social life will reach its perfection there. They who are arrayed in white robes, coming through much tribulation into the kingdom, will have a common interest, and together will recount the discipline that was effectual in leading them to embrace the conditions of the life eternal. Joy will be mutual.

What blessed elements make up the Christian's hope — the Christian's heaven! No good thing is withheld.

They are not only to have the companionship of all the loving and loved, embraced in gospel faith, through all eternity, but there is to be familiar and joyful intercourse with Jesus himself, with God and angels forever. What incitements are these to the love of Christ here, which is an essential preparation for "the glory to be revealed!"

How should it stimulate all, amid the insecurity of earthly treasures, to lay up a portion in the great storehouse above, against which the winds of adversity never blow, the waves of destruction never beat! We are tempest-tost pilgrims here, subject to a thousand dangers, and often, just at the moment when we see most in the horizon to excite our fears, when we look to our friends and fellow-travellers for help in the hour of peril and anxiety, they fail us, and we are left alone to battle with the winds and waves, feeling that the conflict is unequal. There will be none of this, sailing down the calm, bright ocean of eternity. The happy voyagers there will never fail, never prove false to the confidence reposed in them. They will never speak in tones of disappointment, never know the feelings consequent upon unequal powers for any given work.

Earth and heaven are different. One is a place of preparation, the other a place of full fruition. One is a place of uncertainty, the other is a place of full and blessed assurance, and that assurance is perfect enjoyment forever and ever.

What hallowed greetings there will be in glory! What pen can tell the emotions of the faithful ambassador of Jesus as he recognizes those whom he has led to the cross, those whom he

has pointed to the open fountain again and again, perhaps never knowing in time whether their souls looked and lived ! “ I went down with her to the banks of the Jordan,” said one, coming from the death-bed of a triumphant Christian, “ and I shall pass over and hear her tell the circumstances of her joyful arrival at Canaan after I left her. I committed her to angel hands, and we know she went safely ; and hoping to secure the same guide, the same convoy that attended her, I shall be conducted also to the same shore where she has gone, and she will come to welcome me, I doubt not, with an expression of love she never gave me below.”

The humble and retiring Christian, too, that labored in a quiet sphere for the good of souls, will see those who stand up and witness to his faithfulness — those whom he has been instrumental in starting in the divine life, or encouraging to holy endeavor after the feeble step had been turned heavenward.

Blessed indeed are these recognitions, faithful Christian. Thy reward is great, thy prospect is glorious. The constant acquisition of heavenly knowledge will only be new accessions to thy store of bliss. Every new acquaintance will bring new revelations that will stir new emotions, causing a fresh tide of holy joy to be coursing through thy soul. To know Christ is the first consideration : this acquaintance includes all, for it is he who is to introduce us to the society of heaven ; it is he who grants recognition to his people in another and far different state.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHILDREN IN HEAVEN.

Childhood and Innocence. — Power of infant Smiles. — The Convict. — Lord Byron. — Children an Attraction of Heaven. — Saved by Grace. — Theory of Augustine. — The early Reformers. — Zwingli. — Calvin. — Christ's Love to little Ones a Pledge.

“There is a Reaper, whose name is Death;

And with his sickle keen

He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,

And the flowers that grow between.

“‘Shall I have nought that is fair?’ saith he,

‘Have nought but the bearded grain?’

Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,

I will give them all back again.” — *Longfellow.*

IF beauty and innocence are anywhere enthroned in this world, it is upon the brow of infancy and childhood. The material world is by no means wanting in attraction; there is much that is lovely here, but the beauty is not like the fadeless lines which we see drawn upon the souls of the little lisping ones fresh from the hand of their Maker. This is spiritual, and therefore infinitely exceeds all that the inanimate creation presents. The sparkling eye betrays intelligence long before language becomes the vehicle of expression, and the joyous smile and ringing laugh tell how much happiness dwells in the little bosom, given by God himself, who breathed the breath of life into the tiny form, and watches over it with tender interest. There are no such smiles in all the world as those of infancy — so pure, so loving, so sweet. There is no selfish policy lurking at the bottom of these, no hypocritical semblance of love that it is considered better to show than not to show. These have no

resemblance to smiles that are forced : when they play upon the countenance, it is because a loving nature must find expression ; because a happy spirit must lavish its wealth upon others, which favoring Heaven bestowed so freely. Conscience has no reproaches for them ; the workings of remorse disturb not the placidity of their features or the tranquillity of their souls. The repose so often manifest here suggests the idea of a better land to care-burdened hearts. The loving smile of a child has melted an obdurate heart, and made it give forth tears of penitence when all things else have failed, when the most stirring appeals from fellow-citizens and companions have fallen only to be unheeded and unfelt. It has proved a ray of light to the desponding, that has sent him on the way of life with new courage ; a burst of sunshine to the gloomy one, that has kindled fresh animation, and invested the objects of earth and time with a new beauty and meaning ; and it has soothed and comforted the mourning heart like a Heaven-sent messenger to lighten or remove the burdens so often imposed.

"Is God dead?" whispered the soft voice of a child in the ear of its weeping mother. "Why?" said the parent. "Because you told me God was always good," said the child, "and you cry as if he was dead." The unconscious rebuke did its work. The innocent child returned to her play ; the mother dried her tears, to mourn and to marvel because of her own distrust of Divine Providence, and at the faithfulness of her little reprover, whom God had so effectually used.

A lonely convict in a prison cell was attracted by the smiling countenance of a little child three or four years of age, and begged to be allowed the privilege of taking it to his arms. The little prattler, all unconscious of sin and its dreadful effects, sat upon the knee of him who had trampled upon the sacredness of law, and smiled as sweetly upon him as upon others not so guilty.

Flowers blossom in rugged landscapes, in isolated patches at the base of frosty mountains, and we regard them as gems of

rare beauty — we appreciate them more because of their position and surroundings. Kindred emotions might be awakened at a sight like this — the innocent beside the man of towering guilt ; the one softening under gentle, genial influences, the other not knowing how much she imparts by the fragrance of her unfolding virtues.

Day by day the child visited the cell, until the wretched man came to listen for the pattering of the light footstep upon the stone-laid floor with the greatest eagerness. In these moments of strange communion he forgot his wretchedness, and felt his soul struggling to claim affinity with that which is pure and noble — a desire to wear the insignia of a worthy and true character, rather than to bear about continually the impress of fallen and degraded humanity.

It was the mission of that child to reclaim the lost, and lovingly and faithfully she fulfilled her trust. Love and innocence are mighty in the hands of a child. God has made them well nigh irresistible. The proud and callous heart of the infidel has been subdued by them, and brought to the cordial recognition, to the embrace, of all those things which they silently proclaim as the "good part which cannot be taken away." Children have led those strongest in sin willing captives to the feet of Jesus, there to surrender every weapon ever employed against the authority of Heaven ; they have subdued the careless to reflection, and caused the prayerless to bow tremblingly and anxiously at the throne of grace. They have suggested words of encouragement to the doubting, and those of warning to the unbelieving. They play an important part in the acts of the world's drama. God, the prime mover and actor, fits them by his own training to perform their part in wonderful perfection. They are essential to the scene — to its effect. The group upon the stage of life is not complete without them. Their clear and silvery notes must chime in with the organ and the lute, or there is something wanting — there is a chord in human nature that is not touched.

There are feelings in every soul that will always remain dormant until the low cooings of an infantile creature stir them up ; and then, as if a magic spring had been touched, they burst from their confinement, and fly out to fullest and freest activity. Nothing else has such power. It is well nigh marvellous ; and yet to the happy recipients of this influence it seems most natural that this should be. There seems so much of sweet simplicity in the look that appeals silently, yet touchingly, for love and protection, they cannot but allow it to go into the very depths of their natures. We have awarded power to childhood, and it is just. We might cite very many instances where it has been exerted so as to bless the world, to exalt and benefit mankind ; but it is to helpless and smiling infancy that we turn now as unto something of peculiar loveliness.

"Three things," says a pleasing writer, "appear to be uninjured by the fall—the song of birds, the beauty of flowers, and the smile of infancy ; for it is difficult to conceive how either of these could have been more perfect had man remained holy ; as if God would leave us something to remind us of the Paradise we have lost, and to point us to that which we may regain."

We cannot tell just how deep an impress sin has left upon all things ; but it is to be confessed that if there is anything heavenly here below, it is seen in the smile of innocence as it rests upon the features of the little ones before they begin to know there is such a thing as sin in the world. As morning is brighter and fresher than the noonday, as the bud that laughingly opens is more beautiful than the full-blown flower, so is the infant soul, unfolding itself in the congenial atmosphere of love, more attractive and winning than in later years, when it begins to choose that which is wrong, and yield itself to an influence that obscures the early brightness. Whether Christian or not, it is acknowledged by all parental hearts that there is a power in the smiles of the little cherubs that look up, as if they would say, Love that which is good, which they cannot resist.

Byron has been considered wanting in the finer sensibilities of the human heart ; and those at all acquainted with his character know that the gentle virtues did not flourish there — the soil was not congenial. Home and its dear and sacred associations, which other men love and cling to strongest and longest, he put away from him, procuring for himself banishment to a distant land, that he might be beyond the sphere from whence softening, hallowed influences would flow. Even there he was haunted by the image of his infant daughter ; and the involuntary sigh often escaped his lips because of the sweetness and loveliness that could not reach or comfort him. There, in his exile, he acknowledged to himself there would be pleasure to watch for the first dawning of intelligence and the unfoldings of her infantile mind.

Harsher natures even than Byron's have been touched and made better by these same things ; and it seems that the little ones have been sent into the world on a mission which they are unconsciously to fulfil — one that it is difficult, yea, almost impossible, for those more advanced in life to perform at all. A few short months of infant teaching have sometimes done more than the most eloquent appeals of the most gifted could accomplish in a long time — done it silently, but effectually.

An only son, living with his parents, took home a wife ; and in the course of time, for some reason or other, a division arose, followed by an unhappy alienation between the younger pair and the elders. It continued, and seemed likely to increase, until was heard the soft voice of one of these little Heaven-sent messengers calling to reconciliation. It twined about the heart of the parents, and, reaching still farther, took hold upon those next related, drawing all together by the cords of love. Strife was buried, animosity no more cherished, and the loving circle was happy — made so by a little child. How beautiful the incident ! Poets are wont to catch everything that is fair and lovely in the world ; and it is for this reason we so often see odes and sonnets dedicated to smiling infancy.

They have taken their places by them, and expressed their admiration and love in smooth and harmonious numbers, more smooth because of the dimpled cheek that touched their own; more harmonious because of the soft hand that played so skillfully upon the heartstrings. "To my child," is the dedication often observed; and there follows what seems a world of beauty to the originators, in "silken hair," "bright eyes," "loving looks," and "gleeful smiles." It is well that it should be so. It is well that every parent should sing, —

"A babe in a house is a well-spring of pleasure."

It is well that there is something to stir the heart-fountain to its very depths; it is needful. It was kind in Him who "knew what human hearts would prove," to make the provision which was demanded. Says one, from the outgoings of parental affection, while reviewing the playful acts and winning ways of his infant child, "Human bliss arrives at perfection as frequently in such scenes and experiences as when we have made calculations for happiness: indeed, we are never more happy than during the little sudden tournaments of love with a young child.

"Sometimes," he adds, "I looked at the sweet creature with a feeling of awe. Mine, indeed, she was; but in what a subordinate sense! That perfect frame, that wondrous mind, that immortal destiny, often made me shrink into nothingness at the contemplation of her, feeling that God, in making her, had rolled a sphere into an orbit which is measureless, making it touch mine, but having a path of its own, which cannot be comprehended in that of another, not even in that of the earthly parent. She was to me a perfect joy. Her beautifully unfolding life left me nothing to desire."

How intense the love felt for these young immortals! What watchings are maintained, what self-denials cheerfully endured, for their sakes! They are carefully shielded from the cold winds of adversity, and closely pressed to the bosom, if any

danger is nigh; and if death approaches, parents would fain take their little ones with them. "I wish I might take him with me," said a youthful mother, upon the bed of death, of her infant child, one that she had called her own but a few months. Fondly she had gazed into the depths of its little eyes, and read what none others could see there, and it had awakened many pleasant thoughts. So it is with every mother. There are no eyes that reveal quite so much as those that turn confidently to her from the one she calls her own. Are these to have so prominent a place in the homes of earth, in their enjoyments, and then have none in the heavenly household? Will not infants, departing this life, be as flowers transplanted to a richer soil and more genial clime, to unfold in greater beauty and perfection there? Will they not ascend to heaven to dwell forever in love—the only element they have ever known? Will they not be one of the attractions of heaven? These are questions which loving and mourning hearts, bereft of their little treasures, must ask. Thought and affection will follow them to their spirit destination, and try to comprehend the character of their new life; but all that they can know is what they can ascertain this side the grave, from the sources God has given. The veil is never lifted to gratify human curiosity; mortals may never see what is behind, until they, too, enter into the sacred enclosure, and see what they have long desired to see.

We love to think that infants are carried to heaven; we have foundation for the belief, as we think. What other fit place for their pure spirits do we know?

"Heaven would be wanting in one attraction," said a venerable divine, "were I to dissociate the idea of children with it." He had himself buried a bright little creature, whose first lisping accents had been of heaven and the angels, and who went to the spirit land with the idea of obtaining wings that would do service in fanning the fevered brows of the loved ones that he had left. "Mother," said the little one, whose

childish lore seemed to be of God, "I'm going up into the sky, and when I'm an angel, I'll come and fan you with my wings." Ripeness for heaven seems not alone the result of long experience and discipline. There are some little forms, some little souls, of almost angelic loveliness from the very moment of their existence, and Heaven lovingly calls them hence, before the world has breathed a blight upon their innocence, to their brighter home in the skies. They go with a smile upon their lips, that tells of joy they never had words to express. Can any one look upon an infant, smiling and peaceful in death, and doubt that heaven has begun with that little spirit which has gone?

"I saw an infant, marble cold,
Borne from the pillowing breast,
And in the shroud's embracing fold
Laid down to dreamless rest;
And, moved with bitterness, I sighed,
Not for the babe that slept,
But for the mother at its side,
Whose soul in anguish wept."

The little sleepers need not our tears. They escape the woes and trials that beset the path of life so thickly, and live in blissful ignorance of the dire experience and power of sin. There are no steps to retrace, no departures to mourn over. We do not say that these are by nature holy — that by virtue of their own they enter into the world of light and love. The atonement of Christ is necessary for their salvation.

They have not actual transgression to be washed away and answered for; but the moral taint consequent upon the fall is upon them, and the blood of Jesus must insure their entrance into Paradise. When the Israelites so sinned that they were excluded from Canaan, the children were included in the promise and the blessing. So it seems that the infants taken from among the sinning children of men are among those that the Redeemer takes to himself. "Their angels," said Christ, "do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

Blessed assurance to those who have laid their little ones in the grave ! It has dried the tears in the eyes of many a Christian mother, and made feelings of loneliness and sadness give place to those of inexpressible comfort, causing the heart to join in the expression of one bereaved, "I do feel that there is some honor and privilege in being selected by Christ to contribute an infant soul to his mediatorial crown. I am glad that I had a flower in my garden, so precious that the Lord of all wished to transplant it for me to his own special care and love."

Sometimes whole households are transplanted in the tender buddings of infancy. We have seen one after another cut down, until a long row of little graves told the home story of desolation and grief; but these sweet things of earth, these infant souls, stand "amid the wonders of the shining throne," and ought not to be mourned over. Who ever bent over a little coffin without inwardly exclaiming that the silent sleeper was the infinite gainer, in having so soon exchanged its prison-house of clay for a mansion in the skies? In the vision that the exile of Patmos was permitted to have of the New Jerusalem, he "saw the dead, small and great, stand before God;" those who went in the morning of life, as well as those who departed in the evening.

Immortal youth is the gift of all the celestial inhabitants; but we imagine a difference between those who entered the sacred city with the accumulated honors of age, and those who went with the seal of rosy childhood. We cannot tell of the sphere awarded to infancy there. That they are interested in Him through whom their salvation was secured is evident from the fact that they always are beholding the face radiant with divine glory. Their minds will be continually unfolding a necessity of the law of progress in all God's universe; and redemption will doubtless be made plain to their minds in some portion of their history which runs parallel with eternity. Harbaugh has said that "infants pass out of this world

without a knowledge of that manifold wisdom which belongs to the plan of salvation, and it is reasonable to believe that they will be taught it there. It is a beautiful suggestion, which some writers have made, that these infant spirits are, in heaven, under the tuition of angels and human spirits. If they there learn what they had no time here to acquire, of which there can be no doubt, it is more natural, and most in accordance with all we know of the divine order, to suppose that it will be imparted to them in the natural way, than that it will be done by a miracle. For, not only would their own happiness be increased by such a gradual opening of their minds to the dawn of holy wisdom, but it would also afford occasion of purest joy to benevolent spirits, whether angelic or human, to be thus employed. What can afford a sweeter consolation to the bereaved bosom than the idea of deceased infants being at once received as the *protégés* of celestial guardians, and there trained in the lessons of angelic wisdom and love? How precious the thought that these tender flowerets of hope are not so much nipped and withered by death as transplanted to a heavenly garden, there to flourish in brighter bloom, and to exhale a richer fragrance through ages unknowing of an end!"

This is a precious Christian doctrine, though in times past it has been denied by those professing to hold the faith; and now it is not everywhere prevalent. Augustine, a prominent father of the primitive church, argued to the contrary — that salvation remained not for the little ones; and such was the character of his reasoning and teachings as to obtain for him the very unenviable title of "harsh father of infants."

The early reformers, so firm and true on many important points of Christian faith and doctrine, nevertheless coincided in sentiment with the above leader, and certain so-called churches of the present time maintain that, unless the seal of baptism is borne, there is no admission into heaven. Such is the belief of the Roman Catholic church now: hence !•

eagerness of Catholic parents to present their children for baptism at an early day, lest they be taken away, and be lost forever. "Accursed" is the word written, by the order of an established council, against all those who teach anything else. Confidence in their salvation is never felt until they stand by the altar for the administration of the sacred rite, that is to be unto them as a passport through the pearly gates into the place of peace and blessedness.

Among the first, if not the first, to advocate the doctrine of infant salvation, whether baptized or not, was the Swiss reformer Zwingle. With him it made no difference whether life began in Christian or in heathen lands; all those who had never shared in actual sin he believed would be saved by grace; and he looked upon the whole band of infants that go up from the world to the God that owns them, as an army to serve in the Lord's field above with pure and sinless delight. By faith he saw the arms of Jesus embracing them all, and giving them everlasting protection in his kingdom.

At a later day the name of Calvin became associated with this same truth, and it received earnest and faithful vindication from him. He, too, saw the smiling infant group take wings, and fly to the bosom of Jesus; and then he saw the Good Shepherd conduct them into pleasant places beside the "still waters," and cause them to lie down in the green and flowery pastures of the heavenly land, there to be delighted with everything that met their gaze, and to be safe from every danger, and free from all weariness.

All this might indeed be a pleasant illusion of the human mind. One that had mourned a loving child departed might, perhaps, naturally have had some such visions of its final weal. It is not improbable, but we should find nothing certain, were we limited to human authority entirely. We might, indeed, very justly conclude that innocence would find its only and appropriate place in heaven — it belongs there.

It is the words of Jesus, however, here as elsewhere, that assure our minds as nothing else does.

“ See Israel's gentle Shepherd stand
With all-engaging charms ;
Haik ! how he calls the tender lambs,
And folds them in his arms !

“ ‘ Permit them to approach,’ he cries,
‘ Nor scorn their humble name ;
For ’twas to bless such souls as these
The Lord of angels came.’ ”

It is a touching scene in the life of Christ, when he takes little children in his arms and blesses them. Behold Him of transcendent glory — the divine and almighty Saviour, to whom “ the uttermost parts of the earth ” are given for a possession — stooping most benignantly to cheer and comfort the little ones. What tenderness is manifest ! How the compassion of his infinite heart is lavished upon them ! The disciples would not have the precious time of their Lord wasted thus ; they and those that were older demanded his care and attention. They even rebuked those who brought children to Jesus for his merciful ministry and blessing. But what was the response ? The sacred lips parted, and there flowed forth the words that have been echoed by so many childish voices, and which have comforted so many bleeding hearts, since that memorable day and occasion which called them out — “ Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” “ Jesus himself became an infant, sanctifying infants.” He loved them, and when he said, “ of such is the kingdom,” can there be any doubt of its meaning ? A “ child ” was set for an example when the people would know of the fitness he required for admission to the heaven prepared. “ Except ye become as this,” was the reply, “ ye cannot enter ; ” thereby implying that these were eminently fitted for his kingdom and rest. It was for them to shout hosanna in earth and heaven to his praise. They are to form jewels in his crown, to shine in his diadem of glory forever.

Behold how the white-robed infant multitude extends its vast and interminable lines along the city of God, till the last fade from sight in the dim, distant infinitude of bliss; and, at the approach of Him who blessed all when he blessed those in his arms, they join in the full chorus of the sky: "The Lamb! the Lamb! Worthy is the Lamb that died for us!" It is Jesus that paved the way for them to the skies, "for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

It is on this ground that Christians rejoicingly stand when they look into the graves of those they have kept but a little time. They hear the invitation of Jesus to the children, "Suffer them to come," and they are glad they are bidden to the royal court so early: they mingle again in the varied scenes of active life, with the restraining and comforting thought that they have a child in heaven, that the "early lost are early saved." "I think of my child as just above me," said a Christian mother: "I look up, and by faith see the little one happy in lisping the praises of Jesus. I cannot wish it back." Dirges are not befitting the death of children. God takes them in his mercy — lambs "untasked, untried;" and Christ clasps them to his embrace lovingly and tenderly, forever to shield them with his love. They go from this world without feeling any of those parting pangs which others feel — without any of those fears of coming retribution which crowd in upon the guilty soul when the uplifting veil reveals the eternal future, and without the knowledge that Death is a stern and inexorable foe to mankind in general. They meet the summons of the messenger without any dread, and lie down in the grave with no idea of its loneliness. They go through the dark valley, and fly to the bosom of their Saviour with love and confidence, saying, as it would seem, "I am thine — I come!" There "they shall all bloom in fields of light" — there, it may be, watch for the coming of those who gave them up below.

"When a shepherd finds the sheep unwilling to enter the fold," says Dr. Payson, "he sometimes takes up the lambs.

and places them within, when their dams will follow." An ambitious and worldly-minded mother doted upon her infant child. She pressed it to her bosom, and questioned not her right to call it all her own; but He who gave it rightfully presented a superior claim, and took it to himself. As the mother thought of the voice that was forever hushed, as she looked upon the marble brow, the closed eye and lip, and felt, moreover, the dreadful vacancy in her heart, she felt her soul stirred in opposition to the divine will, and she murmured, "Why must I be so hardly dealt with? It is unjust. Those who have many have their circles unbroken, while my one is taken from me." "God needed your child in heaven," said a friend, "and he wants you to follow."

The tempest of rebellion was stilled, the angry waves ceased their raging, and the mother began to think, even over the body of her child, of a port of peace. The future and its conditions began to wear a new significance, and to appear more like living realities. She had a child "passed into the skies," and she too was passing away. The frivolities of the world yielded her no comfort in the hour of bereavement; they were no preparation for the time that was coming — the time when earth and all its scenes would grow dim and fade away. The voice of the dead seemed ever to say, "Come to these regions of light and love, mother; come where Jesus, the Saviour, lives." Wherever she went, in whatever she engaged, she still heard the pleading tones, as of an unseen spirit, saying, Come to Jesus and heaven. In such a frame her eye met the words, —

"Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish,
Come, at the shrine of God fervently kneel
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish:
Earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot heal."

It was balm to her aching heart; it led her to the fountain of truth; and searching the sacred pages, she found the gates of light, and entered in. She bowed in loving submission to the Most High, and said with equal heartiness as did one of old,

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord." The child upon earth never led her to the foot of the cross. It was the child in heaven, and she thanked God he took her child to a place of safety to secure her own.

God's ways are just and right. He takes many, very many, from the world in infancy : we know not why, but they accomplish the end of their creation in their brief sojourn here, and it is well. Theirs is a mission of love, and they perform it well, and the Lord owns and takes them, before the burden and heat of the day overpower them, and they faint beneath the pressure that is upon them. Surely it is loving kindness and tender mercy that is over these little ones.

" ' My Lord hath need of the flowerets gay,
The Reaper said, and smiled ;
' Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where he was once a child.' "

If the Lord need the little children to enhance the loveliness of his heavenly home, why should parents resign themselves to uncontrollable grief when their little ones are transplanted thither? This, we know, is treading on sacred ground. We know that when the tendrils of affection are twined about the lisping, loving ones, it is like touching the life in its most vital part to have them torn away ; but we know, too, that the infinite heart of Jesus sympathizes most tenderly when he applies the instrument of separation, and that he never leaves them bruised and bleeding without providing balm for their healing. He sees a necessity for calling the " little child unto him ; " nor should mortals attempt to pry between the " folded leaves," where the reason is hid. Reasons are reserved for future revelation : it should be enough that love is the principle of the divine government ; that it underlies all discipline, however seemingly adverse this may be. Our mission is imperfect ; we can see but a little way, for there is a mist between us and the spiritual ; there is a cloud between us and the throne where " righteousness and judgment " have their habitation.

When the child of wicked parents is taken away from the evil that surrounds it, it is not hard to say, It is well, or even to rejoice in the event. We say it is more fortunate than in this ungenial atmosphere, where there is no probability that it will develop into soul-beauty, dispensing fragrance in its path that will benefit and gladden others. It is true, we are glad for such, that the Lord takes them from the evil to come; that he takes them into his own presence, and saves them by grace.

When the little ones are marked as victims of suffering, then, too, we rejoice in an early translation to a world where suffering is unknown. We feel not like wishing their protracted stay, for it is only prolonging the sorrow we cannot mitigate. A sigh of relief almost bursts from the heart when the last breath leaves an expression of peace upon the body, whence the viewless, painless spirit has fled, and we say, It is a mercy to the child that it was taken. In some of these things we can see reasons, but there are other instances that we are wont to signalize as trying dispensations, mysterious providences.

When a beautiful child of Christian parents is smitten down, — one around whom the hallowed influences of Christ's religion will be made to gather from earliest infancy, with their power to fit for a useful and happy life, — then it seems more strange that the Destroyer is abroad — that he is permitted to send an arrow just there.

When the wife has been bereft of companion and children, and one, the last, remains as a beam of sunshine on her path, that one grows pale and languishes, and shuts its eyes upon all sublunary things, we mingle our tears with the mourner, and wonder that the only solace was taken away. But why these selfish wonderings? Are not the great plans and purposes of God better than all human calculation?

"If God needs my child for his glory," said a father, eminent for his piety, "I am willing he should take it." He needs what he takes — he takes what he needs; and this should be the feeling with which little rigid bodies and little graves should be viewed.

From whatever condition children are taken, they are called in heavenly wisdom, and with their early death ends all uncertainty of final salvation; for we repeat, that He who cares so tenderly for the lambs, He who regarded them so lovingly when he was upon earth, will not banish them from his presence; He will not leave them to perish apart from the fold.

So much of beauty is associated with the death of infants with a certain people, and this an unchristian one, that, instead of symbols of mourning, everything is decorated with the greatest care. The coffin which encloses their remains is an elegant embroidered trunk, in which the child lies enveloped in flowers. "The cloisters where they are deposited are remarkably dry and neat, kept always fresh with paint and whitewash, and generally in a pretty garden, embellished with parterres and aromatic flowering shrubs; so that the charnel-house is divested of everything offensive, or even dismal, and redolent with incense and perfumes."

The inhabitants of an island of the sea were formerly in the habit of bearing their infants to burial with lively and playful airs of music sounding all the way to the grave. Shall heathen nations see occasion for joyful emotions, and not those in Christian lands, who see angels bending down to clasp their little ones, and bear them to the bosom of the Saviour, to regions of pure and unending delight?

Shall they sing lively strains at burial-placés, and Christians refuse to sing the Lord's songs because he sometimes calls them hither. Mourning for the dead is a privilege that is not denied us. We should prove ourselves unnatural did we not weep; but grief should be chastened and moderated, and may be by the application of the sovereign remedy, Gilead's balm.

The sweet, opening buds are lovely; we love to look at them; we love to cherish them; and we grieve to see them droop from the parent stem; but there is much, O, how much! that is comforting in the death of infant children. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BODY GLORIFIED.

Rich Endowments of Immortality. — Conflicting State of Body and Spirit here. — The glorified Body powerful. — Glorious and honorable. — Incorruptible and spiritual. — Blessedness of the Combination. — Holiness and Perfection the End of true Self-Discipline.

“Made like him, like him we rise.”

“O, how the resurrection light
Will clarify believer’s sight.”

How richly endowed is immortality! No mortal being can traverse the length and breadth of this broad avenue; none know its heights, that tower so sublimely above the skies, or look into the depths to discover the shining ore that sparkles beneath the gaze of the Omniscient One. These places have been trodden alone by the Infinite, in the past eternity of his existence; but in a time coming he may act as guide in conducting the sainted ones to the place where the treasures lie concealed. Moreover, he may say unto them, as they stand with admiring gaze, “These are thine; use them for thy pleasure.” There is a great deal of beauty and of wealth in this world that we call ours; but it is limited, being confined to a few that we call favored — a few whom Fortune and Nature seem to have crowned with special honor. There are places in remote lands, far over desert plains and stormy oceans, where veins of gold and silver run through the earth; and a few leave all to gain their treasures, that the current of life may run quicker and smoother with them. There are pearls imbedded deep beneath the dark waves of the ocean, and life

is put in jeopardy to obtain the brilliant drops that sparkle like dew on the petals of the summer flower of the morning; and there are diamonds washed from sands that many thousands cannot buy, and which men value as the glory of kingdoms. There are green-clad hills, and sunny glens. There are beautiful landscapes, and smiling, "happy valleys," that are not all fable. But the beauty grows dim, and the wealth fades away, before the superior brightness and richness of all things on the immortal shores.

There is no peril in extracting the pearls from the ocean of immortality, no weariness in searching for the diamonds that glisten in the sands of the "crystal stream." Golconda is not to be mentioned beside the richly-freighted mines of the celestial world. The treasures there exceed, both in quantity and quality, all ever obtained below. There is no dross, nothing of inferior value. All is pure gold, without alloy. The hills, glens, and vales are more bright and fair than the fairest here. Discontent came into the "Happy Valley," of fabled memory, and marred the happiness of a strangely-favored family; but it is a forbidden guest among the Immortals, and they roam the whole country with never a feeling of this sort. Why should they, with so rich an inheritance, so rich a nature?

We speak of remarkable endowments in this life, and language has a fitness for these things. It expresses our appreciation of it—its power, strength, and beauty; but when we come to speak of the rich endowments of immortality, what terms can proclaim its glory? It has blessings for both body and soul; and who can tell what these blessings involve—what it is to rise to a spiritual existence—to rise with that "spiritual body" of which Paul speaks? Body now is a hinderance to the soul's activity; but then it will be a most desirable and blessed auxiliary in effecting those things to which God calls, and holy ambition prompts. Now it cripples the energy of spirit, continually dragging it downward, when it is ever desirous of pluming itself for lofty and ennobling flights—

keeping it in the "Valley of Humiliation" when it would stand on the "Delectable Mountains." Now it is deformed, imperfect, and inefficient; but there it will be beautiful, perfect, wondrously and gloriously efficient, working harmoniously with spirit in the blessed sphere they occupy, — together a rising monument to God's glory — an everlasting memorial to his praise.

We leave out something of the completeness of salvation, if we leave out the body; if we suppose it merely a framework built up around the spirit for its temporary advantage, while maintaining its connection with the material world, and to be of no more use forever, when this connection ceases. At the last, "they that are in their graves shall come forth." What shall come forth?

The spirit never was there. That has long been with God. Our "slumbering dust" is the Father's care, and would he guard it to no purpose, if it had no end to serve hereafter?

Into every proper conception of the heavenly world there enters the idea of a glorified body. What that body may be we learn only by revelation, though its analogies bring us to the silent and unseen influences of nature, which produce results that we can see, while the manner of operation is not seen. It is for us to "take what the Lord revealeth." The question was once asked by the children of men, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" and the answer was, "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." Through the power of God, and the work of Christ, there is to come from the "corruptible body," that is deposited in the grave, one that is incorruptible; from one that is weak, one that will be strong; from one that bears the marks of dishonor, one with which will be associated the greatest of honor.

Know we not that Omnipotence is equal to the production of all this? Pagan philosophers answer, no! — that it is absurd — contrary to nature; that the body is only the place of confinement, the tomb of the spirit; and that upon the flight of the latter there is no more need of the former; therefore it

crumbles away, a useless and forgotten thing, not even remembered as the cell of former occupancy. They argue further, even declaring it an impossibility with the Divine Being to accomplish it — a something which he neither could nor would do; and that if one should base wishes and expectations upon it, would find the hope groundless, and the desire utterly futile. Others cannot at all reconcile the idea of anything like a material body with a pure spirit, — such is the deep-seated and unconquerable prejudice they entertain against all matter. This is the origin, the sum total, as it were, of all evil. With them, matter and spirit are eternally antagonistic principles, and no power on earth or in heaven they deem sufficient to bring about a perfect union. The former, like the evil spirit of the red man, allures and enslaves the latter, and the gift of salvation is freedom from the dominion of the earthly power, finally and forever. This is human reasoning. No mortal invention could bring them together so as to produce anything like harmony.

The work is not required of mortals, they are inadequate to it. It demands infinite resources — the skill of *one* who is mighty in all things. It needed the incarnation, the wonderful display on Calvary, and the bursting of the sacred, garden sepulchre, where the loving disciple had made his precious deposit of the Saviour of the world. It needed his reappearance to the band of the faithful, his triumphant ascension to the skies, — to the throne of glory, — it needed all this to make the work complete. He has thus sanctified matter, and brought it into union with spirit. The body is no more altogether an enemy of the soul, but a companion that parts company a while, to be restored and retained in everlasting bonds, in a higher and perfect state. The bliss of the sainted ones is to be enhanced thereby; such companionship is to add to their power, their glory, and their joy. We may not tell in just what way this will be accomplished. We cannot understand the glory of the glorified, while shut in by the walls of mortality and carnality; we can-

not appreciate the beauty of those beautified ones upon whom the brightness of the "beatific vision" is constantly beaming — those who reflect continually the beauty of the Eternal. We cannot comprehend the power that will be exercised, that will be consequent upon the combination of a perfect body and pure spirit; neither can we, as we have elsewhere said, trace the relation between the earthly and the heavenly, the material and the spiritual.

We declare the present life to be an earnest of a future one — that it involves strong presumptive proof of a continued state of existence when we have passed the suburbs of time, and emerged into the unknown. In like manner we look to the body for the appearance of that germ which will unfold itself perfectly, when every adverse element will be dropped, and it be no more subject to the varying atmosphere of earth. Suppose we see not the germ. It does not necessarily follow that it is not there. Supposing we could see it, but could not divine the process of expansion, — it would by no means follow as a thing of certainty, that it is impossible.

Looking upon the chrysalis, we could never tell how a golden-winged butterfly is to come forth, spreading itself, and mounting in the free air. Before it was a worm, trailing itself in a dusty path on the ground, with not the least shadow of probability, apparently, that a brilliant destiny awaited it. Nevertheless, it carried in the foldings of its inner self the germ of its future life — a higher and more expansive one. We acknowledge the fact, but we cannot tell how or why it is; it is a strange and curious process that the Creator himself instituted; and we can only wonder and admire. We award all the honor and skill here to the Divine. We must do it; for there is not a single result in all the departments of human effort that at all compares with it. It defies imitation; it stands alone — the work of God.

Shall we acknowledge a power equal to the production of this in spheres infinitely below us, and shall we not recognize

the same as adequate to produce a similar change in the present though unpromising structure of our own bodies? We slowly measure our steps upon this terrestrial vale, and at last "wrap the drapery of our couch about us, and lie down" in the stillness and silence of the grave, and the sceptic says, it is the end; possibilities cease upon a broken stem. There is no grafting of life upon death, no evolving of fire when the embers have lost every spark of vitality. Looking with an eye of sense, such is the conclusion we might expect. There is, indeed, little evidence to such, that the decaying form, hid away under its earthly covering, will one day be restored, a glorious and spiritual body, to mount in the clear air of purer skies, and revel in the delights of a new existence—a more exalted position. It needs the eye of faith to see this; it needs the believing heart to embrace this; for we are told it by "oracles," and are not to have the sight until we burst the cerements of the tomb, and rise, "in newness of life," to another sphere. The change is great from a creeping, forbidding worm to a gorgeous-winged creature soaring aloft in the sunlight, or reposing in the bosom of flowers; but the contrast is infinitely greater between a poor, helpless, and powerless subject of probation, and the same one free, strong, joyous, exulting in a higher life, and in being clad in the paraphernalia of heaven.

Sacred lore, too, has been found in the field of the husbandman, in the grains he scattereth with his hand. There, too, is a finger pointing to the skies, saying, That which thou sowest will appear again in richness and plenteousness in God's harvest and on his plains. "As the germ in spring time emerges in vigor and beauty from the bosom of the rotting seed, so there arises ever out of decay the joyous infancy of immortal life. That which fades and turns to dust in autumn becomes the fertilizer that feeds those germs which its decay leaves untouched behind it. As long as we see that, in the place where the faded flower grew, there appears the better and more substantial fruit, we have the sweet assurance that the garlands and buds

of promise, which seem to perish around the tomb of human glory, will be succeeded by the rich fruition of an imperishable life." Thus life follows death everywhere. Thus in all these things is there a hidden germ, from which springs a rich and beautiful harvest.

The sap which descends into the roots of the tree in the autumn, causing apparent death, reascends in the spring to clothe the sere and leafless branches with new beauty and vitality, and it scarcely seems to us reclining under its grateful shade in the noonday heat of a summer sun, that it is the same which stood bereft and solitary but a few short months before; and yet it is. This is a process of nature, and we have so many times seen it repeated, it has lost its strangeness and novelty. The Christian who recognizes a Father's hand in all things, loves to dwell upon these changes, as proofs of the divine love and care. But why so much difference between sense and faith? Is it not as easy to believe that the same power which renews the trees of the forest, which reclothes them each successive year, will, from the lifeless form that sleeps in the dust, bring forth a new, beautiful, and spiritual body, to rejoice in a new existence, to accomplish a glorious destiny?

The flowering shrub which succumbs to the early frost lies prostrate, with the life-principle apparently extinct, and thus remains until the warm breath of a May-day sun touches the hidden springs, and reveals a source of life. Then the buds begin to swell and unfold, the flowers to expand in all their beauty and sweetness. It is, as it were, a new creation; yet the germ of this has been preserved in its wintry grave, and from this the fair blossoms have sprung. Is there nothing in this to tell us of a future glorified body?

Does it not afford evidence — presumptive it may be — yet grateful, that the tomb will yield its trust as the nucleus of something new and better? "God giveth a body, as it hath pleased him." The proof is not from analogy merely. We love the intimations from this source; we cherish them, we clasp

them to our bosoms, we weave them into our souls as the precious and sacred woof of our eternal destiny ; but it is God's word that constitutes the warp. Nature has a texture of immortality, but it takes inspiration to complete the web, to impart the necessary quality and finish. But to observe analogy once more, and that to which the thoughtful mind of the apostle was drawn, the seed is scattered broadcast over the field ; it decays, is resolved into its constituent elements ; but from the general dissolution there arises a rich and waving harvest — not the same grain, indeed, that was deposited in the earth, but a consequence of it. There is an important, a vital relation, we know. There could not have been the life, the new up-rising, without the death. Herein is the condition of growth and development, the secret of new evolution. Like to this may be the relation between the natural and the spiritual or glorified body. That which is committed to the grave returns to the earth as it was, having no more affinity with the laws of life ; but, like the decaying seed, it has a relation to what shall be. "The old body is just as necessary to the new as the old decaying grain is to the new plant, and to the new seed."

"That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain ; it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain : but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." "That is," says Harbaugh, "the same body which its predecessor had, or the body which belongs to its kind. The comparison between the body that is sown and the body which shall be, does not seem to be between the seed in the earth and the stalk that grows from it, but rather between the seed that is in the earth and that which is formed on the top of the stalk — the history of the stalk being regarded as the intervening transformation period. Thus, as the seed in the earth, in time, repeats itself in the new seed, so the analogy requires us to think that the form of the celestial body will preserve the image of the body which has perished in the grave. The Saviour appeared after his resurrection in a body which

presented the same outward appearance as that in which he dwelt among his disciples before his death, and which enabled them to recognize him by those marks of identity by which they knew him before. Moses and Elias, on the mount of transfiguration, evidently appeared in bodies fashioned after that type which is familiar to us here.

"We assume, then, that the apparent import of some passages and phrases of Scripture tends to suggest the belief that the die of human nature, as to its form and figure, is to be used in a new world. Partly on the ground of inferences from general principles, and partly on the strength of particular assertions, we suppose that the fair and faultless paradisaical model of human beauty and majesty, which stood forward as the illustrious instance of creative wisdom—the bright gem of the visible world—this form too, which has been born and consecrated by incarnate Deity, it shall at length regain its forfeited honors, and once more be pronounced 'very good;' so good as to forbid its being superseded; yea more, that it shall be reinstated, and allowed, after its long degradation, to enjoy its birthright of immortality."

Who can put on a sad countenance, and speak in desponding tones of the great change that is coming, that is inevitable to every one of the human species? Surely it is not becoming to the Christian thus to demean himself when every step of his progress is from glory to glory. The change is, indeed, great for him, but it is also glorious. It is transformation, but upon every feature of it is written exaltation in living characters. The blessed perfection, he will know in the world of light, will most emphatically be unlike the imperfection he once knew, the joyous freedom very different from his former bondage, and all his relations in striking and delightful contrast with all that was previously known. A body that pleases God must be transcendently glorious—a structure of inconceivable beauty; and such have all his saints. Whatever pleases God will please them; therefore, what harmony and appreciation will exist among the ranks of the blessed!

There will be no disturbing influences to affect those refined organizations; nothing can deface the "image of the heavenly," for the source of its brightness is ever present to keep it undimmed forever. There is no friction — no blight — no decay to come near the glorified bodies which the ransomed possess. What, then, will be their power? While within the precincts of mortality, the spirit is repressed in its efforts, restrained in its endeavors, by the influence of encircling matter; but in the land of immortality it shall be different — spirit shall triumph over everything else — it will be supreme. If it have a "body," this will aid the spirit effectually in all its movements and designs — it will be no limitation, no restraint whatever. All that is conceived in the idea of freedom will be realized in the union; and, all that we can associate with the idea of power is experienced also. It is sin that prevents the harmonizing of the elements of power in this world — that hinders the efficiency of concentrated forces in worthy and benevolent enterprises — that throws difficulties and obstacles in the way of the chariot of salvation, and before those whose guiding hand would make a way for it in all the earth. It is sin that makes the individual so powerless in vanquishing the foes which threaten his destruction, that makes him so weak when assailed by those that are ever lying in wait to entice him away from the path of self-denial, which must be traversed to get to the Holy City, and toward which he is looking, half wishing that he were there.

It is sin that keeps one so long halting "between two opinions," causing him to lie down on an uneasy couch, and awake to a restless knowledge day by day, without the power to throw down the burden and escape from the pressure.

It is sin that prevents the wavering one from breaking over the customs and prejudices of an "evil and gainsaying world," from laying aside its trammels and chains, with a fixed and final determination to be henceforth guided by the Infinite One — to be influenced by considerations above and beyond all that is

earthly and transitory. In these workings of sin there is a want of moral power. In the decision involving obedience there is a divinely granted power. In the determination to live a life of faith, and walk in the ways of holiness, a power is delegated from above. But there is a painful deficiency in this power while wielded by fleshly weapons — not in the thing itself, but from a want where it falls. Power, as such, in its fullest and richest extent, its varied and all-conquering nature, — we mean, as God-communicated, — is found alone in heaven, in the glorified bodies of the redeemed. Creature-power culminates there. The disturbing forces of sin are never present to distract and confound, to cause a failure in the slightest degree. His chosen ones even reign — though with the mildest authority, yet most potent in sway — they are “kings and priests” there, and exercise most benignant rule over all, in the sphere to which they are called.

The soul naturally loves power; it craves it, seeks it sometimes, yea, oftentimes, for base ends; but rightly seeking it from holiest motive, it shall be given, even in this life, as an earnest of that which shall be vested in the glorified being hereafter. That which is “sown in weakness” will be “raised in power.” This will be an element of the spiritual being, and not to be comprehended in its blissful application now — power, it may be, to go to the ends of the earth on the holiest errand, on the most loving missions; power, it may be, to go to other worlds to tell of love divine, love redeeming — to witness wonderful displays of creative skill; power, it may be, to plan and execute great and noble deeds; but, at least, a power to do God’s will and pleasure forever. And is not this an inexpressible delight, O Christian, encompassed with the infirmities of the flesh, struggling with sin, and longing to be free from its entanglements — with a desire that excels all others in strength and constancy? Paul often paused in his journey to the heavenly Canaan to mourn over the hinderances interposed by a body of sin and death; lamented the poor ability within himself to work out the noble

purposes of a spiritual mind ; and among the brightest anticipations which he indulged of his future home and rest were the power and freedom secured by the absence of all sin — the power that he should have in his glorified and immortal body. This was associated in his mind with the "victory" of which he triumphantly spoke, toward the close of his mortal life, when he was laying down the weapons with which he had successfully fought, for the full enjoyment of peace in the promised land. So, too, have Christians in all ages exulted in the prospect.

But the body is not only "raised in power," — it is "raised in glory" also ; and how expressive this word as used by the sacred writers ! — not beauty, not excellence simply, but glory, transcendent brightness, a brilliancy surpassing mortal conception.

Who can tell the meaning of the Scripture phrase, "full of glory," or comprehend what was intended by "glory, honor, and immortality," or analyze and bring out plain to the understanding what it is to be "glorified with him," even Christ? These are things to be learned in God's eternal school, under his direct and blessed teaching ; these are things to be observed when, standing in the holy ranks, the brightness of the heavenly host is everywhere reflected. Fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ is the promise ; his body is the pattern ; and what ideas does it suggest of beauty and symmetry, of fitness and perfection !

"His face did shine as the sun," in the days of his incarnation, when "he was transfigured before" the three disciples, and the heavenly manifestations so attracted them that they would fain dwell continually amid such glory. After his death, they were found ever rehearsing, with fresh interest, to wondering circles, the glory they had beheld in the victim of the cross — the conqueror of Death — the Redeemer of mankind. The so-called "beloved" saw glory as he leaned upon the loving bosom, and looked into the unfathomable depths of those eyes that beamed upon him ; and afterward the concentrated light, in vision, overcame his senses, and made him insensible to all things save a divine radiance that exceeded that of the sun, shining in his

strength. The person of Jesus was always luminous — it was a living exhibition of a glory not of this world ; and when the future body shall be fashioned like unto his, then, indeed, shall be realized all that is said concerning the faithful ones shining like suns and stars in the kingdom of the Father.

“ When the soul is in heaven,” said an ancient Jew, “ it is clothed with celestial light ; when it returns to the body, it shall have the same light ; and then the body shall shine like the splendor of the firmament of heaven.” There are often bright, shining beams in the soul of man, that never find their way out through the fleshly veil. They illuminate the inner chambers, and discover, it may be, many things to the man ; but it is as if close shutters were between himself and others ; it is as if a cloud hung over the fair prospect, obscuring its brightness, and hiding it from the general gaze.

The body here is a gross medium through which the spirit-glory does not manifest itself. The world is all unconscious of much of the beauty that lies blooming on Christian soil, within the mind’s own gates. It is shut out, nay, shut in, by a living barrier ; but in the glorified state it will not be so — there “ the spirit shines out through a body which its own glory makes transparent. The glorified body will be the complete outward manifestation of the glorified soul.”

The invisible gives place to the visible, and clouds and darkness no more hide, or obscure in any sense, the brightness of the soul ; for that “ which is perfect is come.” The beauty of holiness expands into glory, revealing itself in the sun-lit countenances of the ransomed, becoming the unutterable, the inexpressible of our present ideas. As Christ was “ altogether lovely,” so will also the glorified saint be in the day of final resurrection ; for he has bathed himself in the clear stream issuing from Calvary, and come forth with neither a spot, nor a stain, nor a blemish. He bears the likeness of the Saviour — that perfect and satisfying likeness which so many have coveted to possess. In what strange contrast will that be with

the image of the earthly — that image so often marred and defaced by the marks of sin — that image in which it was often so difficult to trace the lineaments of the Divine! How different will be the glorified body from that miserable, pain-distressed form which disease crushed, until no more remained for it but to moulder in the dust, an inanimate and lifeless thing! The one is unsightly and forbidding; the other immortal, beautiful, yea, glorious, reflecting the indescribable glory of the Eternal, and bearing about with it the unearthly lustre of the skies.

"There is a process known familiarly to the chemist as crystallization; and it is produced sometimes by the action of the solar rays. Let the liquid mass which holds the particles in solution be placed in the light, and lucid points shoot here and there, around which every luciform atom arranges itself in beautiful transparencies, and is no longer a component of the residual mass. Even so it is when Christ touches the souls of his own people with light. Death dissolves our weak and suffering humanity, breaks up the societies and families of earth, and pours the individual atoms disintegrated into the spirit realm. But all whose qualities are luciform there move obedient to the touch of the solar rays, are separated from the residual portion, and formed into gems that become radiant in the eternal splendors. Thus the crystalline societies of heaven are arranged. Thus all which the Father gives to the Son shall be raised up again at the last day." Thus meditates a modern writer upon this subject. It is true that the varied representations of Scripture, which leave nothing untouched, do warrant the idea of crystalline glories; but it is also true that no illustration or analogy is equal to a full and just portrayal of that body's appearance which shall emerge, finished and glorious, from the hands of the Redeemer to occupy the place assigned it, to perform the functions appointed it at the right hand of God in the heavenly world.

What a halo of light, then, encircles the grave when we lay

down the lifeless forms of our beloved ones, our Christian friends, there! What a cheerful radiance does hope throw around that dark place — that dismal mansion! What is laid there helpless shall be “raised in power,” “in glory.” They sleep; but they shall awake — awake to a beauty that will never decay, a freshness that will ever remain, and the enjoyment of a rest that will never be disturbed. They shall awake to the full realization of all the blessedness of immortality. With this knowledge, why mourn, with grief inconsolable, because those we love have found sweet rest a little sooner than we? because they are encompassed with glory, and walk in the light a little before us? Let imagination follow the worn and wasted body to its final destination, to the time when the elements will be gathered that will produce the glorified structure, and behold it “clothed upon” with that which is from heaven; and say, does it not seem a legacy of priceless value? Does it not seem fit to be employed in the service of Him who is perfect, and “exalted above all gods”? Surely blessed and glorious is the Christian’s destiny!

But there is another excellence of the body that is to be given — it is incorruptible. Great power and glory might be given it for a period, and then withdrawn, thus making the boon of questionable value; it might flourish, and become potent, and then become dim and disarmed; but these are not the conditions that are observed in the economy of God — the power and the glory are both to be stronger and brighter, receiving new accessions forever. “I neither know diminution nor decay” is the sentence inscribed upon all the treasures which the saints possess; it is that which is written in legible characters upon every one of those who are glorified. Things are reversed in heaven. Whatever dwells there is incorruptible. From the very beginning of existence in this world, the frail tenement which the spirit occupies is subject to a thousand adverse influences that conspire to produce its fall. The stormy winds of passion

sweep over it, and the weak foundations totter at their base. Toil imposes her burden with the ability to remove the supporting pillars. Grief enters and makes the whole structure tremble.

But if toil and sorrow be kept at a distance, disease, either suddenly or slowly, undermines the residence of the spirit, and it falls, a hopeless and ruined mass, not to be rebuilt in time.

Here and there are seen the premonitions of decay where it grieves us sorely to behold them—in places where we had long hoped to sit calmly and securely in the quiet enjoyment of the shelter afforded. We see one thing after another fail in the structure which has been the delight of our eyes and the joy of our hearts, and every removal causes the deepest pain; it awakens the feeling—which we hesitate to embody in words—that we are inevitably hastening to decay. Such is the truth. Corruption waits to embrace us: but—there is still another truth—so does incorruption. The glorified body is incorruptible; it shall never grow old, never decay, never fall, never be weary. It shall be unceasingly active, and everlastingly capable of activity. Disease, toil, and grief, with their destructive power, are unknown by those who have “crossed the flood.” O, what a body is that which will never know decay in any of its powers, or weariness in any of its forms! The foundations of that body stand sure, for they are laid on the Rock which never fails; the superstructure is raised by the infinite and almighty Architect, and the adornments are made by the divine and inimitable Artist. Behold, then, what beauty appears in the incorruptible body! what glory! Every step heightens the sublimity. As the rapt beholder, looking abroad from lofty mountain on the glowing landscape, cannot find words to express the emotion it inspires, so we, standing upon these high places and looking out upon the transporting scene, cannot speak those things which the eye of faith discerns. They are among the objects indescribable by mortal tongue; they enkindle devotion and awaken longings, but their power is unmeas-

ured by words ; they must be seen to be known — be felt to be realized.

“Father, how wide thy glory shines!
How high thy wonders rise!
Known through the earth by thousand signs,
By thousands through the skies.”

Yea, an “innumerable company” of the glorified ones “try their choicest strains” in attempts for a worthy celebration of these things, and yet fail to give full expression, such as the glory demands. They wonder and gaze through all eternity, and still originate new songs in honor of the ever-unfolding glories that rise upon them. But, once more, it is ours to anticipate a “spiritual body,” an organism refined above all our present power of comprehension, — not something of the nature of pure spirit, for this would utterly absorb all idea of body, but a material frame entirely free from everything that is earthly and sensual, fitted so as to be fully under the dominion of spirit, and the spirit not under bondage to it. In this life the animal body is exacting, all-controlling. It must, it will be obeyed, or cripple, if not entirely prevent, the operations of the mind.

Although the noble aspirations of an individual soul rise superior to the demands of the body for a season, and the higher nature receive exclusive attention, yet in a very little while it is forced to yield, and come down to minister unto the lower nature. The body and its necessities triumph over mind, and bring it into unwilling subjection. This will not be when the spiritual body shall come forth from God’s crucible at the last, purified from all dross, to shine a pure and perfect gem forever in the place where He keeps his jewels. There will be no base dependence, no coercion or extortion, but ever a voice from the willing body, saying, as it were, to every motion of the holy soul, I stand to fulfil thy pleasure — I wait to do thy bidding.

In the days of the flesh sin maintained an unequal connection ; but the enemy is removed, and harmony restored ; there-

fore in the land of the spiritual the right prevails, the highest reigns. There are no more heart-regrets because the sensual usurps the prerogative and lords it over the soul. Spirit finds its own power, its native element, in the celestial state; it meets its true conditions, revels in a congenial atmosphere, and lives on its appropriate and necessary aliment, and the body to which it is united is, in all things and everywhere, a desirable and important auxiliary.

The Divine Spirit permeates the whole, filling with light and love, overshadowing each with a glory surpassing that which came down between the cherubim in days of old, shedding a radiance clearer and softer than that which filled the holy place when the Anointed passed in, and heaven and earth met in his presence. The indwelling of the Spirit purifies the body even here, making it more lovely and refined than before. What a contrast between one cherishing the heavenly visitant and one whose bosom is a stranger to the hallowed company!

The countenance of the former is lighted with sacred peace; love kindles in his eye, and every feature is expressive of joyful emotion. The warring passions are at rest, and the serene look is an index of the tranquil mind within — a mind that acts, or seeks to act, in harmony with God; that soars up to the Infinite, and lingers where the fountain flows that springs from beneath the throne of God. The whole nature is elevated; the affections are sanctified, and nothing expresses the whole but a new creation — the passing away of old things and the institution of new. Every department of thought and feeling is lighted from above, and the whole is overarched by a bow of promise that tells of wondrous pledges concerning loving care and protection on the way hence — the way to heaven. Such are the power and influence of God's Spirit in the hearts of the children of men below. It effects regeneration; and if such is its manifestation here, — so blessed and glorious, — what may we not expect when it shall have full sway in the glorified body of the saint? In view of this, well might the apostle exult in

hope of a spiritual body. That which is implied in the *spiritual* is full of joy to the Christian — the very word has a charm. His watchings and his prayers, his fastings and his tears, all tend to this in the days of his pilgrimage ; they have this for their object, their aim. This is the goal to which holy ambition always turns ; for this Christians willingly die. The purely spiritual dwells inside the golden gates of the New Jerusalem. Those who walk there have glorified bodies — bodies in which are vested power, honor, and glory ; bodies that are incorruptible and spiritual ; and those who have the requisite seal will yet pass in, and receive for their everlasting service these same glorious vestments, that are not made after any human pattern, but with devices wrought out by the King of kings — the Lord of heaven. This, O Christian, belongs to thine inheritance !

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SPIRIT GLORIFIED.

The Attributes of God's Nature warrant Glorification to the Christian. — Results expected from the Union of Love and Power. — The Senses glorified. — The mental and moral elevated. — Mutual Interest of the Saints. — Glory waits for the Believer.

“When, as Justice has long since decreed,
This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,
Then these, thy glorious works, and they who share
That hope, which can alone exclude despair,
Shall live, exempt from weakness and decay,
The brightest wonders of an endless day.” — *Cowper.*

GOD has a way of his own; and if parts of it are mysteriously shrouded in darkness, the end thereof is clear and luminous. Whenever he works, results appear worthy of the workman. They are peculiarly his own. No possible combination of energy, skill, or cunning among mankind can approximate in any measure toward the accomplishment of anything that at all compares with the minutest object he speaks into birth, or the most trifling exhibition of his illimitable power.

A prophet left the cave of his retirement, to which his jealous spirit had driven him, and stood forth to behold the divine manifestation which he was assured would pass before him in the solitary place of nature; and as he stood, he saw the mighty earthquake, and felt the mountain blast sweep by, and wrapping “his face in his mantle,” he trembled at even the “still small voice” that followed; for he had read a lesson of the power of the Most High, and a sense of his awful majesty had

penetrated his soul, and filled him with the deepest humility. When God passes through the material world, he leaves the impress of his footsteps everywhere; so when he diffuses himself through the soul, there is glory in the train. Such power is not exerted with slight effect — it tells mightily where it falls — tells as a renewing, recreative force, or as one that hardens and petrifies to a fearful extent. The Almighty hath “yoked the whirlwinds to his car,” and ridden forth in his might; and at his coming the valleys have arisen in their strength, and the mountains retired from sight, reversing the long-maintained order, making “the rough places plain, and the crooked straight.” These are the doings of power, and call us to consider the mighty and ever-available resources of the great “I AM” — Him who sitteth upon the throne, and “doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.”

But there is another aspect in which things may be viewed; another stand-point, from which we may look out over a verdant landscape, smiling in its loveliness, for the gratification of the soul of man.

A great people once left the galling yoke of their oppressors, and went forth, through deserts and many a wilderness, toward a land of freedom, of which they had heard. A “fiery, cloudy pillar” shielded them, and beckoned them on, by day and by night; the river parted to furnish them a pathway to the regions of safety; water gushed from the rock to cool the fever that was upon them; heaven-descending manna satisfied their hunger, and when this failed, flocks of birds hovered around their tents for their pleasure. Thus did the omniscient eye follow them in their wanderings with loving interest, watching with tenderest care to promote their weal, and averting long the impending woe. When Love divine broods over the earth, the very elements are God’s ministers of good and happiness to man. Showers descend, rich in blessing; and all along the path through the wilderness of mortality are places where we

may pause to erect our Ebenezers, saying, as we do so, Hitherto hath the Lord most lovingly helped us. We find tables spread in the desert, whereon royal dainties are placed, by the side of which a banner waves in the breeze, bearing the invitation, "Come, eat at my table," — "Partake of my bounty, 'without money and without price.'" This is love—it presides in the councils of the Eternal, and the statutes sanctioned there have direct reference to the well-being of men.

Trace its effects upon single souls. Entering into the inner circles of being, it exercises most benignant sway. The proud become humble, the arrogant meek, the stubborn yielding, the scoffer reverential, the selfish benevolent, the careless thoughtful; indeed, there is a change in every thought, purpose, and feeling; it constitutes the Christian; it makes the seeming victim of destruction an heir to eternal life; it is marvellous in working, leading the soul into sympathy with the Eternal. This is the legitimate effect of the heavenly principle, when God unveils this attribute of his nature, and allows its melting influences to fall upon the human soul. It is as when the genial sun of spring looks upon the ice-bound streams, and the rigid chains unclasp, and the dancing waters leap and sparkle in their freedom, making music as they flow.

It is God's work — his work of love. Power and love are then attributes of his nature; and what may we not expect as the offspring of these? We have seen somewhat of their wonderful and beneficent effects as displayed on the theatre of time, and we have stood in silence before the august appearance. We have stood by the sacred altar of the human heart, and witnessed the conversion of flinty adamant into the softest and most pliable substance, upon which heavenly impressions are made by a single touch of the divine hand, and we have said within ourselves, that such power and love, acting together, must be fully equal to the great changes which inspiration declares shall take place, but which some seem disposed to regard as incredible. That something better is provided for

the faithful, is what we might reasonably expect while contemplating the loving power which forms the basis of action in the wise Governor of the universe. From this point it almost seems natural to anticipate a glorified body; but if the grosser receive a glorification, then much more surely that which is highest of all. It is a still higher point in heavenly blessedness than we have yet reached, to stand on "Mount Zion," with the "spirits of the just made perfect," and witness the glory manifest in this direction. What idea can we have of a glorified spirit? It were comparatively easy to magnify and multiply ideas and conceptions, until we have some faint impression of a refined and spiritual body; but they prove an utterly powerless medium in transmitting the light which beams from a glorified spirit. We have some glimpses of the celestial radiance that betoken an unearthly glory; but there are scales to fall, and veils to be removed, before "it shall appear what we shall be."

God is a spirit, encircled by the blazing splendors of the eternal throne, and that glory is to be reflected from the spirit of the saints; and then shall be fulfilled the complete life of the soul which the Redeemer died to accomplish.

When the spirit resigns itself to the supreme guidance of the Most High upon earth, there begins the life of grace within, the earnest of good that is yet to come; but the conditions of the mundane state are opposed to a full unfolding, and it is only a sickly growth that is attained here, at best. There are many limitations and restrictions imposed by the animal and sensual; there is ever a retarding influence to prevent the expansion of that bud which struggles for the full blossom.

Grace prepares the heart-soil and makes it rich, so as to facilitate the growth of that which is implanted; but worms at the root eat out the life, and prevent the vigor, so that, instead of the green and flourishing stalk bearing leaves and flowers, there is a dry and unsightly prospect oftentimes. There may be watering and pruning, careful culture, but it does not yield so full a

return as the watcher desires. This is characteristic of the Christian principle in the soul. The atmosphere of earth is not congenial to it; it never does reach perfection in this changeful and ungenial clime; but there are cheering intimations that appropriate conditions will reveal a beauty which before has been concealed. The beginnings of grace in the heart are like a bud more and more beautiful in its unfolding; but here the analogy fails. The bud of a rose has more of beauty while peeping out from its mossy covering than when it lays this aside in its full bloom; but not so with Christian character. The matured graces of the spirit are more lovely than the first promise. Now and then we see them brought to a higher state of perfection than is wont, and conclude they must arrest the attention of the Heavenly Gardener who will have the fairest plants to enrich his own borders — who would have the richest fragrance for his own pleasure. Many plants do not show their capability until they are transplanted; others, not until they are brought into connection with some others: emphatically is this true with the Christian. Not until within the borders of the celestial garden is he conscious of the power of the living germ that he tended below; not until he is sensible of his glorified surroundings will he awake to the full consciousness of what it will be to have in possession a glorified spirit. The conditions of the one are necessary to the existence of the other. A perfect spirit must have a perfect body. This, we have seen, is the legacy of the saints; and we turn from the consideration of it to the question of what is involved in the spirit-condition that is called glorified. Vastly more, we are aware, than we can comprehend. The philosophy of the human mind is intricate and strange to us now. With all our effort we cannot define the boundaries which separate the realms of matter and spirit. We cannot tell just the ground on which the senses play, and have therefore created a "transition state," through which they may pass and repass, now traversing the regions of the mental, and anon those of the physical, belonging equally to both. Sensation and perception

meet and exchange sympathies — we know not how. Imagination steps in and asserts their connection with the moral nature; and plainly observing effects that we cannot gainsay, we acknowledge a union, and recognize their right to live in close embrace, though at the same time we cannot forbear to give utterance to the words upon our lips that savor of mystery.

That these faculties of sense belong in a measure to soul is evident, and therefore they must survive the grave, and enter into the composition of the glorified structure, forming an essential part of that new life which those are to live who have taken on the likeness of Christ. They are servants that cannot well be dispensed with even on the highest plane of existence that is revealed. They are called in requisition by those who stand "exalted on the everlasting hills," gazing and shouting because of the sights and sounds that greet their vision and fill their souls. "The spirit is dependent upon the senses very much as the tree or plant is upon its roots. The senses are the adits of knowledge, as well as the avenues by which innumerable exquisite sensations, perceptions, and emotions are produced in the spirit."

They are intrusted with a large portion of our happiness in this life, and they may not cease their ministrations to the being that is glorified. God will in no wise deprive the soul of anything that will in any way increase its satisfaction. Such, indeed, might be the conditions of the glorified being as to render these agents wholly unnecessary; but God does not always act according to possibilities. There are thousands of instances under his government where things might have been different; but he chose they should not be. Death might be the destruction of the senses, but it is very evident that it is not so. Sensation and perception go with us, our companions to the eternal world, and they stay with us forever, in that scene that knows no changing. Jesus himself is represented as looking upon the children of men, as feeling for them, as being "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" — a circumstance

that is taken as the ground of a probability that senses are not unknown in the spirit-world ; and if not, then they exist in untold perfectness. The refined senses of a spiritual body must stand in blessed relation to a glorified spirit. One thing, then, involved in this latter idea is, the perfection of the senses, their power, refinement, and enlargement. We know that cultivation has much to do with their expansion here ; that they reach a degree of sensitiveness and perfectness that is surprising even under the limitations of the present life. When these are removed, and they act with native freedom, there will be no restraint, no barrier in the way of continued improvement ; they will always be messengers of good to the happy spirit, while the mysteries of the philosophy of earth will be dispelled by the clearer philosophy of heaven. There will be no more curious speculation of disputed boundaries, for the undisturbed enjoyment of actual possession will preclude all necessity. The senses will minister to a spirit that will be too much absorbed in its grateful and joyous emotions to be troubled and anxious. Bliss will flow in upon it from every avenue. Adoring the wisdom and love that bless so richly, it will drink copious and perpetual draughts and be satisfied.

But, the future life is wrapped up in the folds of the present. All life has its beginnings here ; every one carries within himself the germ of what he will be ; what is capable of continued expansion now will be capable of it to an indefinite extent hereafter. We all know the wonderful acuteness which accompanies the sense of hearing in the absence of sight, and also what strange guests people the chambers of mind when touch drives her chariot thither under such circumstances. The eye also may be trained so as to trace objects clearly and correctly ; but after all, the highest degree of cultivation bestowed upon any or all the senses leaves the earnest soul with a humbling and painful sense of limitation. It yet has an idea of something more perfect, which it is reaching out after, and which it must meet, or be forever dissatisfied. The desire, coupled with the

capabilities, begets a supposition that somewhere, and at some time, the soul will find the advantages it seems created to possess, and there realize the full expansion of that which is here wrapped up in so many folds that the centre is forever hidden.

Inspiration takes the supposition, and transforms it into a certainty, and the era is confidently expected to dawn, by every believing, hopeful one, when all fettering influences shall be withdrawn, and the senses become perfect instruments from which the spirit shall evoke delicious melody. There will be no discord there, no need of retuning. What a contrast! Here so much of jarring, there so much of harmony; here all so limited, there all so boundless; here so gross, there so refined; here so narrow, there so broad; here so uncertain, there ever reliable and perfect.

Imagination cannot picture the joy consequent upon a perfection of the senses, such perfection as meets in the body and spirit that is glorified.

The saints will look upon "the Lamb that was slain," and the sight will kindle a feeling of gratitude, warm the spirit to holy ecstacy, and cause it to speak forth in fervent song. Thus all the senses may find ample sources whence they may be fed — whence they may be fitted for the blessed work assigned them in the heavenly sphere.

What glorious appearances will greet the organ of vision in the world of light! what wondrous things will be descried from afar, in the clear transparency of that atmosphere! Something of this power seems to be given to the dying, as they gather up their feet at the close of their mortal journey. They see what others who stand around them do not see; they hear also what their loving watchers do not hear. The malicious band who surrounded the dying martyr did not behold the glorious visions that lighted up his countenance with a smile of triumph. He knelt, as it were, in the light of the other world; he already felt the hallowed influence of the transforming power upon him, and it began to appear what he should be.

Objects in this world would seem more beautiful if we could look at them through a different medium. They are, in a measure, the reflection of our own minds and hearts. We give them the coloring. The cloudiest days are radiant with light if our spirits are buoyant, if our hearts are rejoicing in the possession of some coveted good; and the brightest days of sunshine are overcast with gloom for us, if we labor under the impression of evil, be it fancied or real. Sad hearts always see clouds of mist, and the despondent behold nothing but a tempestuous sign in the heavens continually. There will be nothing of this in the place whence all fear retires, and all melancholy is banished, for it is the shadows of sin that cause it all, and they never fall in the land of the blest. There the medium through which the senses play is perfect. The perfect eye looks upon perfect scenes, the perfect ear is regaled with the harmony of perfect sounds, and so everything is complete in the life of the glorified. There are times and circumstances in which the children of this world are light-hearted and exultant, when they talk of days that are bright and sunny, of hours that are fleeting and joyous, and of moments that pass all too swiftly, because so richly laden they would retain them longer in their embrace. But these pass on with "remorseless tread," let us plead as we may; and quite as likely in the wake of pleasure there will linger keen-eyed Sorrow, who only waits the filling of the cup to dash it to the ground, a hopeless ruin. From this let thought take its rise to the heavenly place. There are not only seasons in the experience of the saints when the full tide of bliss is poured over their ravished senses, but there is a perpetual flow that knows no ebb. No gloomy clouds settle down upon the horizon which meets their eyes, no siren voice is heard that allures but to disappoint, and no ruins of fond expectations are seen in the whole realm. O, what blessedness waits for the glorified — for the "spirits of the just"!

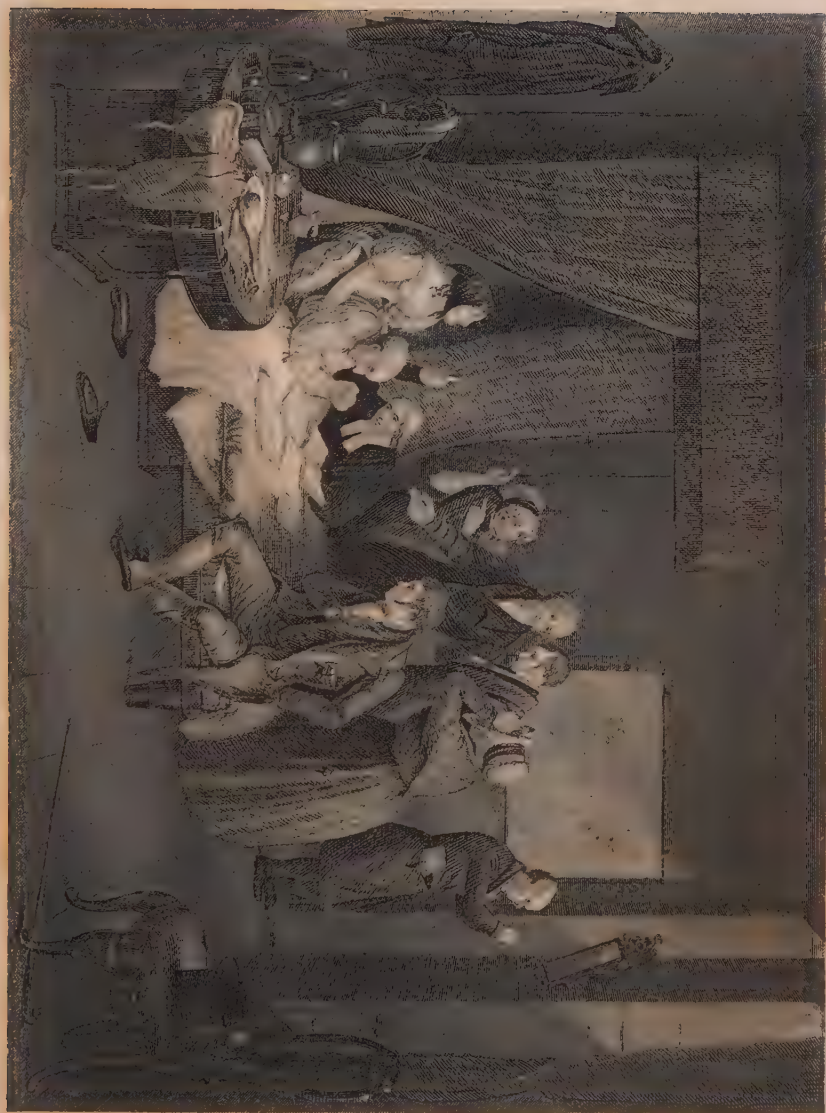
What wonder that the gates of heaven should be opened

at all ! What wonder that such glorious preparations should be made for the entertainment of the inglorious subjects of the fall !

What love and condescension are involved in the freeness of the offer — an offer that would embrace within itself the lost millions of our perishing race ; that would make wide the entrance through the jasper walls, for their final safety and advantage ; that would admit them into full fellowship — to the honors and glories of the celestial court !

A due sense of what it is to be a glorified spirit must swell the bosom of the Christian with holiest anticipation. Some conception of its glory may have beamed upon the departing spirit of Addison, when he said, "Come, see how a Christian can die." He dies with glory in his soul, because Faith comes down to lead the way ; because Hope has lent wings by which the bright aerial pathway to the skies is traversed. These are God-commissioned — his messengers in leading the spirit to himself, to the mansions he has made ready.

But the idea of a glorified spirit involves not only the perfection of the senses, but also that of the intellectual nature, and we soar into a higher region in the contemplation of this. We approach that which is kindred to the Eternal, that which he has selected in all the universe as the most fitting tablet upon which to stamp the impress of his image. It was created with more of God infused into it than anything else in the world, and had a duration ascribed to it far exceeding that of the globe itself. We have so used it, that the lines of the sacred image are almost effaced ; but sometimes musing upon the beauty of the original impression, we weep because it is so stained, and mourn because it is so faded and dim. We seek to restore, but find ourselves inadequate to the task. We have not brush, pencil, or colors wherewith to retouch and bring out what we have lost ; neither have we skill for so delicate a work. It needs — it must have — a touch from the Divine Artist ; and, having it, the beauty reappears, the features as-



sume their speaking radiance, the form its lovely proportions, and the combined result is fair to look upon. He commits it to our keeping, and straightway there is a change; even our very breath sullies it.

Maintain a watchful diligence, said the wise man, for here are the "issues of life." "Get wisdom, get understanding," for these are more "precious than rubies," more to be desired than wealth, or anything that the world, in the vast variety of its treasures, can afford. Those remain to enrich when these fail entirely; the former bless most effectually, while the latter accumulate but to distract, and oftentimes to curse. Wisdom is the glory of the intellectual nature—wisdom, in the broadest, gospel sense. But who does not know the difficulty that attends its acquisition in this world? Who is not conscious of almost insuperable obstacles in the way as he delves for the "hid treasures" of which he has heard?

There is nothing that tells so mightily on the intellect as religion. It is refined and exalted, ennobled and sanctified, in a manner and to an extent that is truly marvellous. It never has the lustre that properly belongs to it until the glorious effulgence of divine wisdom encircles it. If it grovel upon the earth, it places the stamp of its degradation upon every act; if it rise toward heaven, "its native place," there, too, is a corresponding impress manifest "in each event of life." Mind was made to reflect God; the object of life is to burnish and prepare it for the diadem of Jesus; it is the work to which men are called. Whatever, then, contributes to the glory of mind sets forward this great enterprise; whatever increases its power is the addition of so much that is capable of enhancing its value and its brightness, and of determining its position among others of various degrees of brilliancy and power.

But we know this work is not prosecuted with constant success; we know there are many, very many, things that intercept our progress, and that mind languishes, and the intellectual nature suffers. If we attempt to mix nourishing draughts

for it, they are spilled unawares ; if we seek out alimient that seems most befitting, the power to administer becomes feeble or is lost, and we mourn because of the sad failure.

Notwithstanding vigorous exertion, the mind and heart are not kept as they ought to be, and the outspoken feeling of the Christian is sympathy with the apostle who found evil present with him in the hours when he was most intent upon good. That which he would not do was done ; while that which he counted most worthy and desirable was often found to be undone when he reviewed his actions in the season of meditation. He would have mental apprehension quick to discern and ready to appreciate the things pertaining to the kingdom of God and the salvation by Jesus. He would have his spirit so bathed in the infinite and all-cleansing fountain that the image it ought to bear would be clear and distinct to himself and the world ; he would have his intellect powerful to discover, and mighty to comprehend, the things of highest moment in the days of his probation ; and how well he succeeded, how near he came to the standard before him, is seen from his own words : " Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? " This is but a type of the conflict to which all Christians are subject. In their most sacred hours of devotion, when they would bow at the mercy-seat uninfluenced by the vanities of time and sense, when they would have their minds pervaded with the holy influences of the Divine Spirit, they find them truant to every purpose, and themselves unable to control the wayward thoughts. Nothing but incessant and thorough cultivation can prepare the heart for anything like a tolerable harvest of good ; and grace must be the instrument used from beginning to end, or this will utterly fail. The mental nature requires peculiar care. Everything depends upon it. To repeat what has been said before, " Mind makes the man." How important, then, that this part of man be well developed — that due attention be given to a healthy growth ! We know it, we feel and acknowledge it, and, moreover, desire nothing more strongly than a proper

expansion of our intellectual nature : but we see how difficult it is to secure it. To say nothing of the "foes within," there are many external hinderances that conspire to arrest progress in this direction : even the sin-tainted air of our earthly heritage is adverse to its unfolding ; and we might well despair of anything like perfection were there no better things revealed in the future.

Although "encompassed with clouds," and discomfited in effort to make the mind what it should be, the Christian has yet no occasion to despair : for Faith shows, a little farther on, a bright day dawning, when the mental nature will be glorified and stand forth in strength and brightness. There will be no sorrow then because of fruitless effort in mental cultivation, for success will follow every action of the perfect spirit. Power will be given unto it, and every faculty will be exerted in making rich and high attainments in the heavenly life.

We have elsewhere spoken of the increased facility of the receptive and perceptive powers when the earth-fed nature shall surround the royal table of the saints ; of the ease and certainty attending the acquisition of knowledge, and of the multiplied avenues through which it will flow into the holy soul. All this belongs to the conditions of the glorified spirit ; all this is involved in the salvation provided by Jesus, — yea, more, inconceivably more ; but yet, how much lies hidden in this single idea ! What must it be to be in actual possession of the power given unto a glorified spirit, with full opportunity to use that power so as to reap harvests of blessedness continually ! Think, O Christian, of what it will be to be in a world where, ages upon ages, the mental nature will be growing richer and better ; think of what it will be, during all this time, to be constantly soaring higher toward the heights and going deeper into the depths of the infinite love that planted the cross and built the foundations of the Holy City as a sacred enclosure for thyself and thy companions redeemed from the bondage of sin ; think what it will be to have none of the dif-

faculties and distractions which a sin-enslaved body has been wont to feel in the days of the flesh; and think, O think, that He who died to save thee will ever be at thy side to send from the affluence of his affection a tide of joy through all thy being. In this, the senses and the intellect become glorified — complete in all things, fitted for their position, for every new relation in the new world and the new life. God is great, and the works of his hands are great also. Jesus has all power given unto him in heaven and earth; and behold how the gift is employed! We talk about the wonders of the world, the giant structures men have reared, the great achievements they have wrought; we record them in history, and celebrate them in song; but they are lost, all lost, amid the wonders of grace, the displays in the sphere that is divine. What wonders are the gospel scheme, the Christian system, the human soul, the New Jerusalem, the ultimate destiny of the believer, the glorified body and spirit!

It is the culmination of everything desirable to be set down in the midst of the beatitudes of heaven; and the redeemed soul will ever say to itself, O, wonder of grace, that my feet were ever set upon Mount Zion, and drawn so near the throne of God!

But man has a threefold nature. The moral field is not yet surveyed in these reflections about the glorified spirit. To make the being complete, this, too, must be sanctified, and come into harmony with the rest; and surely nothing short of the wondrous operations of divine grace can subdue the luxuriant thistles of passion which take their root deep in this part of man's nature, and make it bloom with the evergreen verdure of immortality. It needs thorough renovation, such as can be experienced only by the energy wrought upon the soul by the Divine — such transformation as that which follows when Jesus has whispered to the repentant soul, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"; "go in peace," for henceforth thine are the freshness and vigor of a new life.

This is indispensable to salvation — it is a part of it — it is the earnest of it; but, even then, the seal of perfection will never rest upon it below: the moral nature will not be beyond reproach until the symmetrical development of character is attained in heaven. When glory is written upon the senses, upon the mental and moral nature, then glory will be the burden of the song: "Glory to God in the highest;" then will be witnessed the consummation of that which the anthem first heralded, the results of that which the angelic choirs then celebrated. In that hour the moral nature looked up, as it were, from its degradation and blight, and felt new power because of the renewing grace that was waiting to descend upon it, recalling it from the low condition to which it had fallen.

Then was commenced an irrigating process that was to make the moral desert bloom with beauty as a fertile and attractive garden.

The work was arduous. Men had each a portion assigned them, a plat that they were to water and tend; and it was to be a life-long interest; but the reward was to be as eternal as the being of God. The success and constancy of moral cultivation are matters which even God and angels look down upon with deepest concern; and in no department of human effort is assistance more devoutly pledged by the Great Helper than in this, the incessant attempt to separate the noxious weeds of vice from the plants of virtue — those plants that when transferred are to enrich and beautify the celestial garden. The moral nature is likened unto a vineyard: it must be pruned, and watched, and cared for, or the time of vintage will be a time of gloom.

Since the curse, it is a toilsome work, that must be ceaselessly pursued in every season of life. There is no gathering the harvest and sitting down to rest; there is something to be done until the sun of life goes down and the obscurity of the grave hides all. There is no time to remit labor, until the power of watching is removed, and the hands cease their cunning forever.

It is a life-long task, and its history is replete with baffled attempts to produce a beauteous growth, which will invite the attention of the Lord of the vineyard as he passeth by. Human will is something that grows rank in the moral realm ; it spreads itself in a manner that is often odious and unsightly, and its roots are deeply imbedded — yea, they ramify themselves through the heart-soil until they underlie and affect everything else, even those things that would otherwise be fair and pleasant to look upon. Perverse affections are engendered by it, and, imbibing the same nourishment, they too grow up with the same bad tendencies, the same forbidding prospect. It is with such elements as these that grace has to contend. Will asserts its supremacy, and declares its right to reign in the moral kingdom, to summon to its aid those affections that best serve its end and facilitate its purposes. Long accustomed to the throne, it becomes strong by indulgence, a perfect tyrant, and thus with the combined influence of "the world, the flesh, and the devil," which is ever brought to bear upon its decisions, it becomes a resolute foe in the way of a hallowed moral triumph. It is the province of grace to secure the latter, the aim of self-will to prevent it ; and there are no more determined enemies on the battle-field of life than those marshalled under the command of this last. Those who would resist must never give up the struggle, but renew the contest boldly, every day, —

" And help divine implore."

It not only creates alienations and strifes between man and man, stimulating to base words and deeds, and exerting to bitter hostility, but it keeps the soul at a distance from its God, unwilling to yield to the claims of the Divine Lawgiver, and the observance of his statutes, which alone lead on to victory and glory. Man's will is arbitrary ; it chooses not to yield, and because the divine government demands a willing spirit, arrays itself against it. When at last its opposition is overruled, and it is made to bow to the Captain of salvation, it yet retains

somewhat of the sternness of its nature, which is manifest in the imperious commands it still dares to make for the professed subjects of a new King and Ruler.

Christians have to contend with self-will in all their course; they mourn because it has so much power over them, because its iron hand crushes out so many heart-purposes which they would have unfolded for the general good. There is nothing that Christians desire more, than to feel at all times, under adverse as well as prosperous circumstances, a cordial submission to the divine will — to be able to say, as well when the hand of chastisement is heavily pressing, as when there is nothing threatening, "Thy will be done." This sentence is often uttered, but how rarely with truth, sincerity, and perfect willingness to have God's will accomplished, though it cross ours at every point, though it thwart every plan we had formed, blight every hope we had cherished, and turn into bitterness the cup which we had prepared so much to our taste! Our theory may be up to the true standard, but our practice is far below.

When God sees fit to mark out a course widely different from that we had chosen for ourselves, and takes measures to lead us therein, we acknowledge the justice, perhaps, but are slow to recognize the mercy; we wonder why he has done thus, why he moves so mysteriously, and we can scarcely see how it is best to say, "Thy will be done." Our will rises to declare the propriety, the wisdom, of that which it intended to pursue, and the injustice of being checked before the final results could be reaped, of being interrupted in the prosecution of schemes which promised so much.

All this is what the Christian "would not," yet has to say, "that I do." He would have God's pleasure his pleasure; but it is not a strange thing for him to find his will conflicting with the divine will when those things which belong to his interest, as he thinks, are withdrawn, when he is compelled to surrender the choicest treasures of his heart.

If it be not always expressed, there is often a silent, half-

unconscious wondering why the Lord could not do without them better than he — why he, in his infinite fulness, should need what seemed indispensable to man's own peace and comfort, in a cold and unsympathizing world. These are the whisperings of a selfish and perverse will, the pleadings of inordinate affection for self and the world, the tones which, if they were gathered up, would resolve themselves into words like these: "My way is better." In the regenerate heart grace maintains the ascendancy; but it is not without a conflict. The moral field is the scene of many a sharp encounter that the world in general knows not of, and those engaged in them look forward with eager hope to the time when they will be victorious over every foe, when they will be "conquerors and more than conquerors" through the aid of their effectual allies. Such a time is promised, and the thought of it sustains in the fiercest engagements; it prompts to action when weariness and despair almost overcome the hard-pressed spirit.

Blessed to the moral agent is the day of final discomfiture of all his foes; that day he enters the streets of the Celestial City in triumph, to be crowned with "everlasting joy," and to know "sorrow and sighing no more;" that day his will and its perverse host forever cease their opposition, and the renewed being, beholding the superior wisdom of the Perfect, breathes forth the willing strains, "Thy will be done." All opposing moral forces end their contest when the Christian goes up before the great white throne to present himself, an unworthy but loyal subject of the King of Kings forever, having triumphed through that which was given unto him, by means of the weapons that were granted from Heaven's own armory. What will be the emotions of such a one, with the mental, moral, and spiritual glorified? What will it be to become the glad recipient of everything involved in this — to have glory, like the waves of the crystal sea, pass over every part of our threefold nature, leaving it bright, holy, and transparent! What blessed deliverance will it bring! What a contrast between the Christian on earth and

the saint in heaven ! Sin clings to the former, and he cannot rid himself of the embrace of the charmer ; he cannot burst the folds with which it encircles him. The latter is fettered by no chains, encompassed with no bands, but rejoices in a freedom that is "entire, wanting nothing." The one carries the marks of many imperfections, the other wears the beautiful garments of holiness which are fitted to a form that is fair and faultless. One cherishes the feeble bud of virtue, the other beholds the full blossom. In short, one is perfect, and the other imperfect ; one is grovelling, the other is glorified ; one is struggling to be submissive, the other is wholly and cheerfully so, because of the fervent love of a sanctified mind and heart that are merged in the Infinite, and "delight to do his will."

"From a will in perfect harmony with the divine will must flow the purest stream of love to God ;" and not only this, "the perfection of man's moral nature in heaven also requires that created wills be brought into right relations to each other. The human will can only be perfected when it is brought into a relation to all other wills. In this world, wills crowd upon each other to their mutual detriment. A vast amount of the degradation, and consequent wretchedness, in the present world, is brought about by oppression. As, in a garden, those plants never come to perfection over which others extend their branches and their shade, so in human society no will can come to perfection where another bears it down." There will be nothing of this among the glorified ones in heaven — the interest of each will be dear to all the others. Selfishness has no sway over the glorified spirit, no entrance into "that great city having the glory of God."

A perfect nature will show perfect results ; perfect plants will come from perfect soil, especially if all the other influences are favorable. The best Christian character upon earth is lovely, but it bears scarce a comparison with its full development in heaven. Truly, "it doth not yet appear what we shall

be." We now "look through a glass darkly" upon everything pertaining to the realm, the condition, and character of the glorified. To the children of God these things are to be opened, and with unclouded vision they will behold the splendors we cannot speak, the glory we cannot symbolize; they will experience what we cannot tell in human language; what we fail to catch when imagination has done her utmost. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!"

"In songs of sublime adoration and praise,
Ye pilgrims, for Zion who press,
Break forth and extol the great Ancient of Days,
His rich and distinguishing grace.
Give all the glory to his holy name:
To him all the glory belongs.
Be yours the high joy still to sound forth his name,
And crown him in each of your songs."

CHAPTER XXXI.

PERPETUITY HEAVEN'S CROWNING GLORY.

The Christian absorbed in "Forever." — A Terror to the Guilty. — Permanence necessary to Enjoyment. — Earth transient. — Heaven permanent. — Motives to seek it. — Recognition of the Judge.

"Should coming days be cold and dark,
We should not cease our singing;
That perfect rest nought can molest,
Where golden harps are ringing.

Let sorrow's rudest tempest blow,
Each chord on earth to sever,
Our King says, Come! and there's our home,
Forever, O, forever." — *Shining Shore.*

A CHRISTIAN man, while sitting at the table of a friend, partaking with others of a social repast, became so absorbed in thoughts of the future as to be insensible to what was transpiring about him, and exclaimed, "Forever, forever!" Eternity filled his mind, and the thought that he himself was to be an actor in its scenes, the hope that his joy would be commensurate with it, overcame every other consideration; and his friends, in attempting to rally him, were only met with a reiteration of the same momentous word, "Forever." Well may it absorb the mind of the Christian; it has a world of joyful meaning in it. Not all the learned tomes of earth have anything of half so much import as this. It was coined at the divine mint, and circulated with its own value stamped upon itself. *Salvation* and *forever* are the prominent words of the Bible. The sacred writers delighted to use them; they saw a glorious significance in them for themselves and others, and therefore

the prominence given them in their vocabulary. The meaning has never been altered; what they meant then, they mean now; not a "jot or tittle" of their force has ever been abated. They fall upon the soul with the same power in these last days as the best prophecy of joy to the believer, and awakening dread in him whose conscience accuses of unrepented sin and unatoned guilt.

"What were thousands of suffering years," said a dying man, "could I hope for a respite then! What were ages if they would bring a limit to my woes! But it is this *forever*, this hopeless *forever*, that appalls me." And a look of despair settled upon his wan features. The word had fallen upon his spirit with agonizing force, and the weight was crushing. It fell upon another spirit at the same time, and behold what a contrast! A smile of ecstasy lighted the death-marked countenance as the lips of the dying man parted to pronounce, "Forever! O this joyful forever!" To him the endless future meant eternal joy, "fulness of pleasure," and glory of condition. It was associated in his mind with an incorruptible crown, a fadeless inheritance, and a ceaseless flow of unalloyed delight; and it was not strange that he should manifest so much joy in presence of the grim sentinel; for "just before" he could discover the "shining shore," upon which he should begin the life that would run on in blessed progress forever. Ah! the word is full of meaning; but the character of that meaning is determined by the condition of the mind and heart. It may come as the message of boundless love and mercy, or as the fearful denunciation of unappeased justice. It may come to the bosom as a thrill of anticipation, or stalk through the corridors of the mind with the giant tread of a merciless foe, that wakes apprehension by every sound; it may soothe and it may trouble; it may lighten the heavy burdens that lie upon the back of mortality, and it may add to them with a pitiless hand. In short, it may be the messenger of untold good or of untold misery. All this mean-

ing is vouchsafed unto it by the lexicographer of heaven. He makes it one thing to the penitent, and quite another thing to the impenitent. It approaches one as the sound of pardon and deliverance approaches the ear of the trembling convict in his cell, and it grasps the other with an embrace like that of the serpent-folds, which make for the victim an unwelcome grave. This twofold character belongs to it; it cannot mean the same thing to the believer and the unbeliever, the Christian and the sinner. One stands enveloped by darkest shadows; the other is encircled by more than noonday light, and the atmosphere that is clear reveals what is never seen through mist and darkness.

But we linger not longer with those who see no blessedness in the condition that is *everlasting* — with those who find nothing but gloomy forebodings in the word *immortal*.

Those who enter the New Jerusalem — that "divine abode," where "life, love, and joy" are always gliding through — have no sweeter sound falling upon their ears than *forever*. It is by the side of these we would walk for a moment, and reflect upon the duration of their bliss, the nature of things supernal; by the side of these who have "washed their robes," and stand bright and shining with their celestial raiment, having a seal upon which may be read the words traced by the divine Saviour, "They shall go no more out forever." Perpetuity is, indeed, the crowning glory of heaven. When Jesus tells us the life that is to come is everlasting, the glory that is to come is eternal, and that the inheritance is never to be taken away, while he sits upon the throne, he tells us just that which will make us supremely happy. When he tells us that the city will continue, that the foundations are abiding, he quiets our fears, and establishes our hopes upon an immovable basis. We must be firmly anchored, or we cannot rest. If there is any danger of being loosened from our moorings, to drift out into an unknown sea, there is no such thing as being fully at ease. The surety of a thing is the enjoyment of a thing. We clasp our earthly

treasures to our hearts, because we feel they are ours by a very precarious tenure, and the thought of insecurity lessens our enjoyment of them.

How many tears are shed because the fairest and best-loved things are so soon removed; because the heart-jewels cannot be retained; because the precious fragrance of love is borne away by breezes that waft it to another land—the land of spirits!

"*Memento mori*" is written upon everything that we see—upon all that we hold here upon earth. We cannot go amiss of the inscription; it meets our gaze at every step; and when weary of the constant appeal, we turn to Truth for something else, it only says, "*Passing away.*" Yes, —

"It is written on the rose —
In its glory's full array;
Read what those buds disclose —
Passing away.

"It is written on the skies
Of the soft blue summer day;
It is traced in sunset's dyes —
Passing away.

"It is written on the trees,
As their young leaves glistening play,
And on brighter things than these —
Passing away.

"It is written on the brow,
Where the spirit's ardent ray
Lives, burns, and triumphs now —
Passing away.

"It is written on the heart;
Alas! that there decay
Should claim from love a part —
Passing away."

This doom is written upon the choicest places, just where our seeming life-interest bids us oftenest look; and what agony is stirred as we read it there; what wishing that it might be transferred to some less valued good — some page not quite

so fair, where it would seem more appropriate ! Ten thousand sighs are breathed every day by aching hearts, because the things of time are so transient, so quickly fade. There is nothing in this world that is abiding — nothing. We talk of earthly things that are perpetual, but the word is a misnomer. Those very same things bear the tracings of the prophecy, "Thy days are numbered," at the very time we attempt to deceive ourselves with the assuring words. Who has not boasted that some pitcher of delights had staid long with him, and then has gone forth to find it straightway broken and valueless ? This is a common experience in human life, and pertains to all earthly possessions ; it was not meant they should be enduring. "*In memoriam*" crowds the pages which meet our eyes, and tells us of sad eras in individual history ; and, as if it were a word of consolation, we say, "Such is the lot of humanity — we may not plead exemption ; what happens to me, must also happen to you — it cometh to all. Enduring things were not meant for time — only for immortality."

Probation presupposes limit. When the two left Paradise as sinners, life with them and their posterity assumed a new aspect. Then was it said, "Go spend it in the vale of tears" — in a land where mildew, blight, and thorns have taken the place of freshness and beauty ; where decay has taken the place of lasting glory. They saw that fading away, outside the borders of their pleasant garden, which within had been glowing in all the richness of an unfading loveliness. Everything bore a different impress, calling for the establishment of a new economy, and this was such as the divine love and justice could consistently give. The requisite discipline of the new dispensation called for an expunging of the word *everlasting* as applied to anything below the sun, and the living race must henceforth bear the appellation of *mortal*. If joy came dancing into their hearts, it was attended by another messenger, who would enjoin moderation by intimating the ex-

ceeding brevity of its visit. If Hope spanned the heavens with her promising bow, they saw it soon overcast by clouds; if Pleasure beguiled for a season, the enticement was sure to be followed by proportionate suffering, and besides this was the consciousness that death would soon put an end to all things. What opened to the exiles of Eden has opened to us; what was characteristic of their life belongs also to ours. Things faded before their vision; they fade before ours also.

The days and weeks passed by them, saying, as they went, "Improve us as we go, for these golden opportunities shall never return." The months and years flew past on noiseless wing, leaving the message in their course, "So much less time to run the race that is appointed, so much to be subtracted from the period of probation." What they said to them they say also unto us; the same voice still rings in our ears, —

"Be wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer."

The places that bear witness to our activity one day may know us no more forever on the morrow. We have seen the robust frame laid prostrate in a single hour, and that, too, when hope and ambition were never brighter and stronger; and for a moment we may have been duly impressed with the utter folly of leaning on broken reeds — an arm of flesh. We have said, then, with the deepest feeling, There is nothing abiding here; it is useless to seek pillars of support when there is no foundation on which they may stand; there is no reason why we may count upon anything in a land of uncertainties. The heart reaches out in vain for something around which to twine itself; it was not meant that such objects should be afforded here. It would be content to remain forever coiling itself around sublunary things; but in mercy the divine arrangements were made so as to disentangle it from these, and allure it to the better land — the perpetual home of perpetual joys. We think much of this world; but we should think more of it, if it was true to our hopes, if it performed

what it promises, if even the good it brings was more lasting. Behold how unsatisfying and insecure it is ! If we count upon health, and lay our plans accordingly, disease steps in, and declares an end to them ; if we rely upon friends in the day of distress and disappointment, they die, and leave us to seek new support, or to go on tremblingly and alone ; if we trust in riches, they " make themselves wings, they fly away ; " or, having these, there is some " thorn in the flesh," to trouble by its lacerations. Thus there is nothing secure and satisfying. The world is full of ruins, of broken columns and mouldering arches, that tell where glory was, and is not. Populous cities that once teemed with life and beauty are now buried beneath the soil, with scarcely a trace of their former grandeur. Something like to this exists in the moral world. There are ruins there of fearful significance, telling where a structure of fair proportions once rose ; where the graceful columns of character once stood ; where the soul-arches were, through which throngs of glad visitors marched. There hopes, purposes, and aspirations lie buried in a grave over which men tread, regardless of what once appeared there, challenging the admiration of each passer-by. Thus uncertainty reigns in the natural and moral world. " Who would have thought of this ? " is the exclamation often upon our lips. We cease not our wonderings over what one change has brought, before we are met by another with such peculiar phases as to excite even greater surprise. We mournfully call it a changing world, and moralize upon its inevitable conditions ; and, pausing here, we should lose ourselves irrecoverably in the miry places of doubt and unbelief. Without Faith's discerning eye, we might not see a reason why all things should fail us as they do ; it might not seem clear why He who presides over all should make the pillars of earthly enjoyment so weak that they fall when we lean against them ; why He should institute change just where we would have things continue as they are ; and why He causes the " stream of brooks " to " pass away " at the moment when it

seems to us to be flowing with such blessed results, making many a verdant and inviting vale for us to repose in.

Without gospel-imparted vision, we should never see why He sends disappointment in its thousand forms, why he blasts so many of our hopes, thwarts so many of our purposes, and lays waste so many fields whose precious harvests we long to gather.

The native desire of the soul is for substantial good, but here on earth it meets with mysteries and mockeries. These things are never comprehended until we open the volume of inspiration, and read the reason why the Infinite has inscribed "vanity of vanities" on all those things which form the furnishing of our earthly habitation. He has prepared a place that will endure, and furnished it with things that are imperishable in their very nature; and they are so much better than our terrestrial conditions, that he would allure us from these in every possible way. Canaan is so much better than Egypt, he would have us leave it to dwell forever in the former. The clusters growing there are indeed richer than the grapes of Eshcol. He gives us the scanty supplies of the desert and the wilderness, that we may better appreciate the richness of the fruit that grows spontaneously all over the promised land. He gives us weariness and disappointment, that we may be better prepared for the endless fruition of hope and rest when we have passed over the Jordan to take our division of the inheritance.

He subjects us to so many changes, because our earthward tendencies are so strong that they continually exclude from our gaze what he is holding out from above; because they keep us trailing our garments in the dust, when we ought to have them gathered up, ready to pass over into the "Better Land."

The highest ideal of all life includes the assurance that it is eternal. "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world," and yet come short of the everlasting prize? That always eludes the grasp. "Earth shall pass away," said He

in whom all truth and wisdom dwelt, but "my words shall not pass away;" therefore, "seek those things which are above," "that good part which shall not be taken away."

These were prominent ideas in the teachings of Jesus — the insecurity of earthly treasures, and the confidence that is warranted by the heavenly. There is but one place where thieves "do not break through nor steal," but one place where "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt," and he would have all men so regard their interest as to transmit what is truly valuable in their possession to this place of safety. Having done this, their hearts would, of course, be there also; and thus the cord would be loosened that bound to a changing world, and the cable made strong that attaches to one that is unchanging. He knows what is of great price, what will result in the greatest advantage, and he is never more intent upon furthering it than when he says, "Deny thyself, take up thy cross, and follow me; and verily thou shalt have thy reward." Then is the road entered that leads where "living waters gently flow," where everything is perennial; and not until the utmost boundary is reached which divides the transitory and the eternal, is there any realizing sense of what is meant by the duration of heavenly bliss. "Vain world," said a Christian upon her dying bed. She had caught a glimpse of the celestial regions, and the fleeting prospects of time scarce seemed worthy a thought in comparison. The joys of heaven, when laid in the balance, outweighed all things else; the latter seemed as insignificant trifles when placed beside of the permanent treasures that shone as they were handed down from the great storehouse of God's love. Permanence gives reality — gives worth. "*No more*" will have a very different meaning in heaven from what it has on earth. It echoes through the chambers of the soul here with most appalling sound, for it is the death-knell to our most cherished joys — it is the dirge played over the burial-place of what we love. It is a sad, very sad, requiem; having once heard it, we never forget it. Wherever we go

we are followed by that terrible "no more," with its melancholy power. It is always whispering, No more of those loving smiles, and cheering words; no more of that happy intercourse and blessed aid ye were wont to receive and know, for there is an end to them; no more hours of undisturbed tranquillity, and no more years of unbroken spirit-minglings, for the Destroyer has taken his prey. It is the song which Time bids his minstrels play continually—the plaintive air it rehearses to every successive group upon the stage, notwithstanding their earnest protests against it, their desire for something more lively and pleasing. They would fain believe that so bitter a portion is not for them; but it is their lot; the sad words are incorporated into the music of earth, and there is no alternative but to submit to their influence.

The words are transfused into heavenly anthems; but O, what a different meaning do they possess there! He who hears them in that place is conscious that "he shall go no more out into the rude storms which have beaten upon him. He shall go no more out as a stranger and a pilgrim. Not a caravansary, but an eternal dwelling-place, does he enter. That immortality shall never put on mortality. He shall go no more out from the presence of patriarchs and prophets, of cherubim and seraphim; nor, most of all, out of the presence of the Lamb, for he shall ever be with the Lord."

In view of it, well might the Christian poet exclaim, —

"O, glory in which I am lost,
Too deep for the plummet of thought!
On an ocean of Deity tost,
I am swallowed, I sink into nought:
Yet, lost and absorbed as I seem,
I chant to the praise of my King,
And, though overwhelmed by the theme.
Am happy whenever I sing."

The singing bands in heaven will be happy everlastingly, they cannot be otherwise while the smiling countenance of the Redeemer is turned toward them, while his favor is beneficently

extended — and it will be until his nature is changed — and such a change enters not into our conceptions. Jesus is “the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever;” and herein do we find a warrant for the continuance of heaven. It is his blissful presence that makes heaven, and this is his abiding throne; therefore he assures his followers, saying, “Where I am, there ye may be also.” “Ye shall go no more out.”

The foundations stand sure, the corner-stone cannot fail; it is everlasting in its nature, and fully equal to the support of all that rests upon it. Ages upon ages may pass away, and the jewelled walls will glisten as brightly as in the day when the first fruits of redemption entered in. Cycles may run their lengthened rounds again and again, and the pearly gates will be as clear and transparent as ever; saints may pass and repass the pathway leading through triumphal arches, and the golden streets will neither be dusty nor dim; the anthems of love may be sung for a period transcending our highest calculations, and they will never grow old and wearisome; they will be as fresh and inspiring at the last as the first. So it will be with all things; time will bring no evidence of decay into the heavenly world, no element to weaken the blessed combination which the Saviour has provided for his people to insure their perfection in character and condition; and not only this, there will be no diminution, but a constant increase, of the power to bless through eternity. And who can comprehend the import of this? The leaves of the forest, the drops of the ocean, the sands of the globe, have all been employed to give an idea of the duration of that we call our future; but they fail entirely of an adequate calculation. The utmost power of numbers is exhausted in the attempt to grasp it; the “eternal years of God” belong to it; and man, by searching, can never find it out. We know that with the Lord “one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” It is to this land of perpetual things, this everlasting habitation, that the Christian is hasting. A little while longer on this side, in the land

of the dying, and he will go to the land of the living, to open his eyes upon an endless and spiritual existence. It is not a wonder that expiring saints sing so much of glory, as they gain a glimpse of the goodly prospect; it is only strange they so often choose to stay longer among the things that are fading and transitory. Watts could sing, —

“One day within the courts
Where my dear Lord hath been,
Is sweeter than ten thousand days
Of pleasurable sin.”

Harriet Newell could say, in view of all the pleasures of earth, “For one blest hour at God’s right hand, I’d give them all away.”

If such be the sweetness of anticipation, such the soul-fertility occasioned by the little rills that flow down from heaven, what will it be to be constantly refreshed “with the river of God!” The things that we anticipate most in time, the days that we can scarcely wait for, the pleasures that we are eager to grasp, are soonest to disappoint us. Not so with heavenly things. Imagination hath never pictured those in their brightness; anticipation hath never compassed them. After all the thoughts, ideas, and conceptions we can bring to cluster around our future home, we are still compelled to say, it “passeth knowledge.” We wonder at the love that has prepared such joy, and made it eternal. Such bliss for a season would show a heart of love; but when we see it flowing on, like a mighty wave, until we lose sight of it in the distance, when we see it surrounding us like a fathomless ocean, we have a view of infinite depths of tenderness and compassion — an amazing sense of what divine goodness has wrought. We say with the apostle, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” We sympathize with Israel’s singer in his yearnings to find full entrance into the holy place, where he could join in the Lord’s songs forever. “They will still be praising thee,” was the idea that kindled the ardor of his soul; that made the flame burn bright upon the altar of devotion;

that made hope mount up to the very gates of the heavenly city ; that opened them and showed the "stream" which made it "glad."

That which constituted the charm of heaven to him will be the same to us, if, like him, we have our hearts in unison with the Lord supreme ; if we wear the signet ring, and carry the certificate of our espousals with us continually.

There will be no commotion in which the Lord will lose sight of us, if we are thus distinguished. He will recognize and own us when earth's assembled millions shall appear for their final allotment, and the "well done" will thrill our souls with delight, such as was never known before. These things have been again and again repeated ; but what can detract from this blessed reality ? It is like the mercies of God, that are "new in the morning and fresh in the evening."

Eternity itself cannot produce satiety. And this, O Christian, is thy destiny — thy glorious reward — to enter the City of God, and dwell in its mansions — its costly and indestructible mansions ; to have a rich share in its fadeless possessions ; to recline peacefully in its evergreen bowers, looking out upon prospects which bear no mark of the sin-blight ; to be ever undisturbed by envious and jealous spirits ; to be always at rest, in the midst of loving and congenial companions ; to be led through scenes of rare beauty by the guiding hand of Jesus ; to experience a soul-expansion during a period that is commensurate with the Eternal ; for, —

" When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less years to sing God's praise
Than when we first began," —

and the enjoyment of this must surely make one purer and better. Praise is ennobling ; it exalts and blesses ; peculiarly so when the object of praise is so worthy, so noble, so good, and high as the triune God — the everlasting Father — the Prince of Peace — the Divine Spirit.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE EDUCATION OF THE SOUL.

Home Preparations always cheerful. — Soul-Education the Work of Life. — Enjoyment proportioned to Cultivation. — The Sea Captain. — The ripe Christian. — The glorious Destiny of Believers. — Passing away not a gloomy Thought to them.

“Be Christ your first selection,
And yours his kind protection
Till life is done.

Then shall you rise,
All earthly hopes releasing,
To scenes of bliss unceasing,
Where joys are still increasing
In Paradise.” — *S. D. Phelps.*

“It requires but little elevation of soul to discover,” says a French writer, “that here there is no substantial delight; that our pleasures are but vanity; that the ills of life are innumerable; and that, after all, death, which threatens us every moment, must in a few years, perhaps in a few days, place us in the eternal condition of happiness, or misery, or nothingness.” These thoughts force themselves upon the most determined votaries of the world, and their experience, barren of everything that is truly worthy and abiding, testifies strongly of its truth, and draws forth expressions from their lips, indicative of gloom and unrest within. A stern necessity is upon them, from which they are always shrinking. Disappointment and ill must come, and death will close the scene, and therefore life is imbittered. But not so with the Christian: he utters language of different character, in which words, as gems and jewels poured from the casket of hope, are resplendent, for they

are associated with ideas of ever-flowing pleasure, of blessed deliverance, and choicest freedom, in the "eternal condition" in which he confidently expects death will place him. Such have an "elevation of soul" that lifts them above sublunary things, and discovers bright regions beyond, that fully compensate for all intervening trials — all that must be endured before they land on those shores. They are "only waiting" until they shall be permitted to weigh anchor and sail on toward the bright isle; and there are no sweeter strains that come to our ears than those which float back over the waters from those who are gliding into the "harbor of heaven," on the "silver tide" of grace, singing, "Homeward bound."

There are no preparations more cheerful and hearty than those made for returning home after a long absence: the heart is light, the countenance smiling, the welcome anticipated, and expectation crowds every hour of the stay with pleasure. We are wont to speak of these seasons as oases in the desert of life, as very Bethels, the sight of which recalls visions of a golden ladder, upon which we almost hear the "stately steppings" of celestial messengers as they come laden with precious gifts to enhance the joy of the home-meeting. Thus does the Christian feel, seeking his Father's home in the skies; thus is his heart affected when he sees the cable loosening, and himself drifting out into the ocean of immortality, where rises the blessed isle upon which appear the lofty towers and battlements of the heavenly city, which is to be henceforth and forever his happy home. Preparations for this he deems of the utmost importance. It demands a peculiar robe — he adjusts it carefully; it requires a peculiar dialect — he studies to acquire it; it needs a peculiar appreciation, and he employs the means to secure it. Everything in any way connected with the event excites the keenest interest. Nothing is trivial that goes to make up the wardrobe which he will need when he mingles with his angelic brethren; nothing is meaningless that in any way promotes fitness for such companionship. There is a soul-education which is absolutely indispensable for a heavenly home.

We have searched for the proofs of immortality, looking down through the ages and centuries in vain for any satisfactory knowledge, until at last we have seen them firmly fixed in the everlasting gospel, where the storms and tempests can never overthrow them. We have gone with a multitude who would fain find some "Elysian land" as the theatre of future activity; and among all the brilliant creations of the human imagination, we find nothing to meet the demands of the soul — nothing, save in the New Jerusalem of the Bible, "coming down from God out of heaven," and opened for the eternal dwelling-place of the redeemed. Here they become realities which our souls may take home as unquestionable and true. Immortality and Paradise! — a blessed conjunction, but one which involves momentous considerations of fitness and preparation.

We educate ourselves for certain positions in this life with unremitting care and perseverance; we spare nothing; time, money, exertion, even our best energies are freely given, and they are considered a wise investment, if so be the end is realized — a fitness for the place long coveted with yearning heart. The physician, the minister, and lawyer have all to apply themselves assiduously to the work of preparation which must be accomplished before they can enter upon the duties and enjoyments of their several professions. Every situation in life demands its own appropriate qualifications, and the fulness and completeness in which they exist are a measure of the ease and effectiveness which characterize the labor of men. This is manifest in all things; there is an important relation between fitness and results. The successful teacher must be well furnished for his work; the prosperous man of business is the one who has been made so by experience, observation, and a thorough knowledge of his trade. The most thoroughly cultivated man is the one chosen for offices of trust, he is the one best fitted, besides being one whose faculties take a wide scope wherein to glean advantage to promote his own individual comfort and happiness. There must be cultivation in order to

rise in the scale of being, and in proportion to this will be the measure of honorable distinction that is meted out to mankind. The education of the several parts of our threefold nature command respect in a certain direction; but it is the combination that results in an harmonious development of all the faculties that produces the model character; it is the sanctification of these which makes the highest type — the Christian character. This constitutes the great work of life, the end of being; it is the purpose of life's mission, that which made us subjects of probation, and invests it with so much importance — even this — to educate ourselves for eternity. We know the character of our future dwelling-place; we know of the society there; of the nature of its employments; of the springs of happiness; and it becomes a question of the gravest import, as well as of deepest interest, How can we best secure the needed preparation to enter an abode so unlike this, so eminently pure, so transcendently holy? We are not unmindful that there is a place the reverse of this, and that many are choosing it, rapidly perfecting themselves in those things that are wantonly indulged in there. But we speak now to those who are interested in the things of the kingdom of God, those who are concerned in making provision for the education of their hearts and souls so as to secure fitness for a higher position than earth affords — those who are desiring entrance into those gates upon which is written "Praise," and to be encircled with those walls upon which is traced "Salvation," in most enduring characters. The eye that is trained shows more discrimination in colors and objects than one that is not trained at all; and the eye of the mind may so be cared for that it will look out upon celestial scenery with a double advantage.

The ear must be cultivated to appreciate the harmony of musical sound; so the corresponding faculty of soul must receive its share of attention to have it capable of listening rapturously to the inimitable songs of the saintly throng around the throne. To be an admirable vocalist requires patient and continued cul-

tivation of the vocal organs, and it needs corresponding diligence in the diviner effort of becoming a minstrel for the heavenly choir. So with all the senses and faculties ; their perfection and expansion depend upon the care bestowed upon them even in this life, and it is equally true as regards the life to come. If the fitting process is not commenced here, if the soul is not educated here for its future, then the opportunity is lost. There is no "knowledge" in the grave ; there is no radical change in the life hereafter. "As the tree falls, so it lies ;" as the soul is when it leaves the body, so it will remain through the countless ages of its being. If the affections, tastes, and sympathies have not been brought into unison with things in the heavenly world, if they do not flow out lovingly and gratefully toward Him who is the chief attraction of the place, now in the days of anticipation, then there will be no realization ; for there must be an establishment and recognition of union here, to find its consummation there. We stand before the world candidates for immortality ; we are examined, and if we bear the test, we receive a certificate ; and this is our passport through the pearly gates. Without it we cannot enter ; the Keeper will say, "I know not whence ye are."

God sends us here, as it were, to school. He furnishes the requisite means, and tells us to improve them in a manner that will promote our highest interests, in a way that will reflect honor upon the munificent Donor. In doing it, he tells us that we shall be forever blessed ; that we shall achieve a destiny unsurpassed in brilliancy and glory ; that we shall be fitted to engage in such pursuits as the holy angels delight in ; that we shall be prepared for situations more honorable than the proudest of earth ; that we shall be introduced to the purest and best minds that have ever lived, and, moreover, enjoy his favor during a period without end. What an inducement to unceasing effort in the training of the soul for heaven ! but "who is sufficient for these things ?" The arduous work will never be done until the victory is won, and the crown obtained ; how, then, shall it be ceaselessly wrought ? Nature or humanity, alone, could never

answer the question. It is a momentous inquiry, and needs a divine teacher; and in compassion for our need, the Infinite stooped down with a revelation in his hands, and said, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye have eternal life;" "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

This is the guiding-star which appears, shedding its grateful light over the narrow way which is to be traversed before the final goal is reached; this is a chart and compass necessary to a safe voyage over the sea of life; this the only source whence we derive information of how we may glide safely into the harbor of eternal rest. There is something to be done. The star may shine, but it will do us no good unless we avail ourselves of its proffered help. The chart and the compass may be good in themselves, but they are nothing to us unless we betake ourselves to their aid. The peaceful haven may stretch itself out before us in all its inviting loveliness, but we shall never be found resting there if we sit idly down waiting for some favoring breeze to waft us thither in our torn and dismantled state. Strolling once by the sea side, I beheld a sea captain bleaching the sails of his ship, preparatory to a voyage to a distant city. They were spread upon the ground so as to take the sun's rays, and again and again water was poured upon them, and the process repeated until they were so white as to be the pride and ornament of his craft. Herein is seen a type of that preparation which is needed spiritually with him who is seeking "the city which hath foundations" out of sight. His soul, like the sails, needs to be made white — to be purified; and to this end it needs the action of the rays of the Sun of righteousness — it needs, and must have, the continued application of the cleansing streams which flow from the side of Jesus; and there is One so much interested in the appearance of his chosen ones that he is ready to pour and pour these upon them until they are so pure and white that the question will be elicited from admiring beholders, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes?" Every way we turn we see the necessity for

vigorous action in the divine life. There are working, waiting, and watching; there are sowing, watering, and reaping, in the natural world; and all this finds its counterpart in the moral and spiritual realm.

There can no more be a harvest in one case than in the other, unless these successive steps are taken. If a full granary would be had, then must there be preparation made to fill it; if we would have the fulness of the heavenly garner for our final portion, then must we labor for it; we must do the share of the work that falls to us in that part of the vineyard where the Lord has placed us, before we can have a title to any share of that which is gained. We cannot enter into the promised land, and share in the life-long joy of its inhabitants, unless we make preparation for it. They would not be congenial associates for us if we should enter there, without similar tastes and dispositions; and we must find these where they found them — near the cross. We must have "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." It must form a prominent part of the education which the soul must gain before it can enter the kingdom of heaven — before it can claim a title to the place where nothing is admitted that defileth.

Purity, in its highest sense, is the prime characteristic of the heavenly world; and unless the soul has an appreciation of it, though it were in the midst of angels and archangels, and an innumerable company of those who are perfectly happy, it would not find itself blessed or entertained. When one subdues the thorns and briers of worldliness in his heart, and takes the Christian graces home, then heaven begins; then commences the unfolding of that germ, which is sure to unfold itself under the bright and genial skies of the immortal land; then love of holiness becomes the actuating principle; then the elements of a saintly life are incorporated into the soul, and it only waits to be disembodied to soar at once to the regions of the blessed, and sing, as others do, of the wonders of heavenly love.

This experience is an essential requisite of every candidate for heaven. To enjoy heaven, he must love and enjoy everything that belongs to it. To take any pleasure in its society, he must feel an interest in those things that control it; or else, mingling there, he would feel like an "alien and a stranger," and hurry away from the unwelcome surroundings — from hearing and seeing what others find it the height of bliss to behold and contemplate.

The unholy have no delight in the society of the holy upon earth; there is no sympathy, no bond of union, to draw them together; what one likes the other dislikes, and they are far, very far, apart in everything. Their pathways diverge, and unless there is a change they never can come together, either in this world or the next. Choice does not bring the hour of mutual comfort and consolation, for the spirit of one has a want that the other does not know or understand. The latter cannot tell of those deep yearnings for holiness that come welling up from the lowest recesses of the Christian heart; of joyful emotions that swell the bosom, ever wearing a broader and deeper channel, through which joy may flow more fully into the soul. They have a strange meaning to him; he cannot comprehend it; how, then, can he expect to have any feeling in unison with the saints, where these things exist in a much greater degree?

He cannot tell of "fellowship with the Father;" of communings with Jesus; of submission to the divine will; of the pleasure of self-sacrifice; and of the peaceful satisfaction of having conquered sin. This is all a strange language to him, — like hieroglyphics which he has never deciphered, — and therefore he cannot sympathize with the holy soul, for this finds its chief joy here; it lives and acts so as to secure the blessed end of all things — salvation. The current of the affections, in its natural way, does not flow in this direction, neither does the stream of desire. They are to be changed, to be reversed, before they will flow toward heaven; before the soul will under-

stand the nature of those plants that bloom all along the valleys of the heart, which are made fertile by the streams of divine grace.

"He is ripe for heaven," was the remark made of an aged Christian, "and why seek to detain him here?"

What constituted his peculiar fitness? Holiness had permeated his soul, and his thoughts, desires, affections, and sympathies had become so sanctified thereby as to employ themselves upon just the same things that holy beings in heaven delight in. He saw the same loveliness in God's character that they had seen; the same beauty in Jesus that had filled them with exulting gladness; and he had been moved by a common impulse with them to render loving service. It was for this reason that he was all ready to plume his wings, and take his flight into that world where he might ever see the Saviour as he is —

"His grace and his glory display,
And all his rich mercy repeat;"

where he might ever be engaged in praise that would have in it nothing but what is holy; where he might dwell continually in an atmosphere that is in no wise tainted with sin. Where this state of mind is found there is fitness for heaven, be it in whom it may. Tread reverently in the room, and before such a one, as he lies, passing away; for as ye listen, ye can almost hear the sound of the "boatman's oar," that soon is to take him to the "farther shore;" and there he will be welcomed by God and angels, to act in a purer sphere than he has ever known, but one which his imagination has revelled in for many an hour in the weary days of probation.

Holiness includes all the Christian graces; love to God, that first and chief element in the Christian life; that necessary basis on which to rear a faultless structure; that principle which seeks to subordinate all the faculties of the nature to the service of heaven.

God is the Author of salvation, the Builder of heaven; he is

the Giver of all good alike in the earth and the world above, and is worthy of the heart's best affections — the soul's truest homage. This the regenerate being always feels; but the feeling did not come until he had been placed under the tuition of his heavenly Teacher, and had been instructed so as to perceive a new meaning in the lesson which had passed in review before his mind many times before. What joy when the hidden truth was made manifest! From the lips of the thoughtful man, as he studies out some invention, there have issued involuntary exclamations of wonder and delight at the sudden comprehension of some part of the plan which before had seemed dark and intricate. It may have been something to bless the world; and those only who have been placed in similar circumstances, with kindred hopes, can tell the measure of satisfaction that is given to such a one. But what comparison does this bear to the discovery of God's love, for the first time, by the anxious soul? One is limited to time, and can only enrich the external life; the other flows through the interior being, and has eternity for its scope. It cannot be shadowed forth by any earthly good. It cannot be classed with any other emotion. The love of God "passeth all understanding:" those who know it by experience, who find it pervading their hearts, who live with an abiding consciousness of the divine favor, — these know there is a blessed power in it, a power to soothe and sustain when everything earthly fails. It is this confiding love in the great "I AM" that makes the soul willing to launch away into the unseen; this trustful acceptance of his salvation, that makes it depart cheerfully and gladly, expecting to find a mansion prepared according to promise, where it may forever be at home with the Lord. Love must have its object near, or it will mourn. The loving Christian would have his Saviour always with him; and it is fellowship with Jesus that makes him look forward to heaven — that glad era when he will be made a welcome guest there, and sing, —

“O, then shall the veil be removed,
And round me thy brightness be poured;
I shall meet Him whom, absent, I loved,
Whom, not having seen, I adored.”

Love begets adoration, and leads to cheerful service. “If we are possessed of this divine principle, we shall delight in his worship, and bow with reverence at his footstool; we shall feel complacency in his character and administration; we shall contemplate with admiration the incomprehensible knowledge, the omnipotent power, and the boundless beneficence displayed in the mighty movements of creation and providence; we shall feel the most lively emotions of gratitude for the numerous blessings he bestows; we shall be resigned to his will under every providential arrangement; and we shall long for that happy world, where the glories of his nature and the kindness of his love shall be more illustriously displayed.” We know such to be the effect of true love to God, and there is nothing else like it; it opens the gates of Paradise as nothing else does, and keeps the eye of faith to discover most inviting fields “beyond the swelling flood,” stretching themselves out in a distance that cannot be measured, and growing more and more beautiful as far as they can be seen.

The heart destitute of love and faith does not see all this, does not anticipate this; it is not prepared, has not been trained for heaven. It has nothing in unison with Jesus, the guide of the soul on the way to heaven, nor with the supreme delight of those who have reached it. It has no loving interest in any of those things which God delights in, and therefore it could find nothing congenial in his service or presence.

If the soul so learns Christ as to love, then it will take into its fellowship all kindred beings; it will love all mankind, and this love has a necessary place in the qualifications of the heavenly candidate. All will love each other in the world that is to come, the heavenly world, and as there is no radical change beyond the grave, the spirit-conditions must be attained before one can enter there.

Active benevolence, too, is an indispensable requisite. This is an attribute of God's nature, and wherever he sees his image he will recognize it. None of those who have labored and suffered for the divine glory will be overlooked or unrewarded in the day when the Judge will summon his people together for a trial. No matter how humble the offering may have been, how poor the service was thought, — if prompted by a sincere motive it will be approved and blessed. It was the constant aim of Jesus, when he was upon earth, to train his disciples for heaven; his mission was one of unexampled benevolence; and he would have his followers bear it in mind, if they would ascend up whither he has gone, that they, too, must be in the practice of this Christian virtue. He would have them begin its practice while they walk among the needy and destitute of earth; he would have them in this preparatory school become familiar with those things that will occupy their attention when they shall go up higher; hence his frequent admonition to "lay up treasures in heaven," to seek the things there, "to be instant in season, out of season" in the performance of those deeds which will be instrumental in making heaven richer for them. "Works," we know, never purchase salvation or heaven; but who does not know that there is such a thing as increasing the joy of eternal life? The one who has done a great deal for Christ here has a fund to draw upon when he enters heaven that others have not. The Saviour will reward every act that is done for his sake, and multiplied acts will insure a richer legacy than the few and isolated obtain. "Give, and it shall be given," is the policy of the divine administration; it is the principle of that government into which all others shall be merged at last. To be happy subjects of this, we must be benevolent, and that too in the broadest sense. And what joy to belong to a kingdom where so delightful a spirit prevails, where the utmost concord of feeling and action exists! Humility, also, that attractive grace, must be a feature of the character which is being fitted for heaven. It occupies a prominent place among the teachings of Christ and

the apostles, perhaps because of the difficulty of gaining a practical knowledge of it. A simple and innocent child was the chosen representative of Jesus to display its loveliness; and it shines with the clearest lustre in those who approach the nearest in likeness to the model. Angels, it is said, are humble; and if they are, how much more should those be whose memory can revert to years of sin, to opposition to the will of Him who was continually seeking to promote their highest interests! Meekness especially becomes the redeemed sinner; and it will be a coveted grace to such; it will be an essential part of the "robe of righteousness," of the "garments of salvation." Indeed, all the Christian graces, as enumerated by the apostle, are necessary to form a character worthy of shining in so pure a place as the "Holy City." None can be left out. It is our mission to learn how to combine these in the best proportion, and the work may well be called arduous; it would be utterly impossible without the aid promised. Were it not that a divine energy is communicated, — that while we are studying, light from above is poured into the mind, — we might despair of ever becoming efficient pupils, of ever finding the rich and hidden lore that is to make us "wise unto salvation." O, what blessed principles are involved in the science of redemption! O, what a glorious position is that to which we are called! Who would not enter the school of Christ, and submit to its discipline and conform to its rules, since such honors are conferred upon those who graduate, since such fields of usefulness and happiness open before them! How many look forward with the greatest eagerness to the period of so-called finished education as the time when they will realize their cherished dreams! But, O pupil of the Great Teacher, it is thine to look forward to an endless life of joy in the holy city when the diploma is given which announces that the season of preparation has been well improved, and the fitness secured for "fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ" — with angels and "just men made perfect."

The New Jerusalem — how pregnant with meaning, with

joyful meaning to the believer in Jesus! And the message to all is, Prepare to enter it. Tread carefully; the way is narrow: go thoughtfully, for a siren voice may be heard alluring another way, and the end of that is death. O Christian, if our hopes are well founded, it matters not that

“Less of earth than we had last year,
Throbs in your veins and throbs in mine,
For the way to heaven is growing clear,
And the gates of the city fairer shine,
And the day that our latest treasures flee,
Wide they will open for you and me.”

COMMENDATIONS.

From Rev. A. H. Burlingham, Pastor of the Second Baptist Church, St. Louis, Mo.

GENTLEMEN: Glory of the Immortal Life," I have examined with much interest and profit. I think it should be read by the million. To every household which procures it, I am sure it will prove a blessing. It is adapted to possess the soul with proper views of immortality, and to impress upon the mind better and more sensible ideas of Heaven than we generally get from books.

A. H. BURLINGHAM.

From Rev. D. C. Eddy, D. D., Pastor of Baldwin Place Church, Boston, Mass.

GENTLEMEN:—I have read the work published by you, entitled "Glory of the Immortal Life," with much pleasure and profit. Its doctrines are Scriptural; its practical teachings salutary; its style elevated and pure, and it abounds with comforts and consolations for the bereaved. The believer in Christ will find his faith increased, his love strengthened, his piety purified, his hope confirmed, by a perusal of these pages. I trust the work will have an extensive circulation.

Yours truly,

D. C. EDDY.

From Rev. G. S. Chase, Columbus, Ohio.

GENTLEMEN:—I have examined with much interest your Book, entitled "Glory of the Immortal Life," and am free to say that, while the argument and course of thought are not new, the Book will meet, by the adaptation of its style to the common mind, a want felt by the masses of a complete view of the life to come, so earnestly desired by every thoughtful person.

It can not fail of having a refining and elevating influence upon all who peruse it.

Very sincerely,

G. S. CHASE.

From Rev. Wooster Parker, Belfast, Maine.

PUBLISHERS:—I have received a copy of "Glory of the Immortal Life." It is a beautiful volume; the type open and fair; the style easy and flowing; a very agreeable, good book. It is sound in its teaching, instructive, cheerful. It presents truths of momentous interest in a cheering and inspiring aspect. And while it will be read with awakened thought and feeling, it can not fail to meet the wants and cravings of many minds, and bring solace and cheer to many who are anxious and troubled about the life to come.

WOOSTER PARKER.

From Rev. Robert Turnbull, D. D., Pastor of First Baptist Church, Hartford, Conn.

GENTLEMEN:—I have read with satisfaction a considerable portion of the work entitled "The Glory of the Immortal Life." It breathes an excellent spirit, and is written in an animated, popular style. It discusses the great question of life and immortality with great earnestness. Its conclusions harmonize with the statements of the Holy Scriptures, and with the general convictions of the Christian world. I hope it may be largely circulated.

Yours truly,

ROBERT TURNBULL.

From Rev. George B. Ide, D. D., Pastor of First Baptist Church, Springfield, Mass.

GENTLEMEN:—I have examined, with more than usual care, the book published by you, entitled "The Glory of the Immortal Life," and am very much pleased with it. The arrangement and style are good; the subject is treated in a sound Christian spirit; and the tone and bearing are eminently devout and spiritual. One very attractive, and to the general reader, most useful portion of the book, is the ample review it contains of the thinking and teaching of all the ages on the Doctrine of a Future State. I most heartily commend and indorse the work, and am sure that to every purchaser who reads it, it will be a treasure, not for a day, but for a life.

GEO. B. IDE.

From Rt. Rev. J. Williams, D. D., Bishop of Connecticut.

MY DEAR SIRS:—It has not been in my power to read *through* the volume you were kind enough to send me; nor shall I, I fear, find time for that for many months to come. Still, I have seen enough to satisfy me that the work has my sympathy and approval. I believe it will do much good, and I wish it may have a wide circulation.

Very truly yours,

J. WILLIAMS.

From Rev. S. G. Willard, Willimantic, Conn.

GENTLEMEN:—I have read some portions of your new work, and think well of the subject and spirit of the book. A good book of this sort is certainly of great value.

Very respectfully,

S. G. WILLARD.

From Rev. H. D. Kitchel, President of Middlebury College, Vt.

GENTLEMEN:—I have read the volume which you sent me, with the more care because of your declared purpose to circulate it widely, and because the topic of the book and its attractive style will probably give it such a circulation.

And I am happy to say that the work is one which I can heartily commend. It is a sober, right-minded book, covering the range of certain deeply interesting, religious themes, maintaining the truth, free from private interpretations and semi-heresies, written freely and freshly, in a style level to common thought, and fitting it for popular devotional reading. The more widely it can be read, the better. It is worthy to lie by the side of the Bible as a family book.

And the neat and beautiful style in which you have put it, will secure it a large circulation wherever its worth is known.

Very truly yours,

H. D. KITCHEL.

From Rev. G. H. Gould, Pastor of First Congregational Church, Hartford, Conn.

I have examined with pleasure the volume entitled "The Glory of the Immortal Life."

Glory of the Im

The theme is one which can never fail profoundly to attract and interest every thoughtful mind. The subject is here treated with a tender and devout spirit, with great thoroughness of plan, wide literary research, and with a reverent conformity to the light which the Inspired Word throws upon the momentous truth of the soul's immortality.

The volume is well fitted to awaken devout feeling, comfort the afflicted, and irradiate the Future Life of all who "sleep in Jesus" with new light and blessedness.

G. H. GOULD.

From Rev. C. B. Crane, Pastor of the South Baptist Church, Hartford, Conn.

I have examined with more than ordinary carefulness

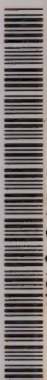
Glory of the

Immortal Life;" and with more than ordinary confidence I can recommend it. Its excellence disproves its deprecatory preface. While it is level to the comprehension of the masses, it will prove an excellent book of reference for the Christian scholar. Its quotations are valuable, its style is lucid, its effect must be good. Picturing chiefly the brighter future, it suggests with sufficient distinctness and emphasis, a darker future, from which men should be delivered through a personal and present faith in Jesus. I hope it may have a large sale.

C. B. CRANE.

We have notices from others equally as flattering, too numerous for insertion.

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